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Lunn.- Amor Patriae. 1823.

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THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
CLASS OF 1882
OF NEW YORK

1918







AMOR PATRIÆ;

A DRAMATIC POEM,

Founded upon, (and partly translated from)
THE "ATTILIO REGOLO" OF METASTASIO.

By JOSEPH LUNN, Esq.

"LA PATRIA È UN TUTTO, DI CUI SIAM PARTI."

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
AND SOLD BY T. GEEVES, 437, STRAND.

1823.

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FROM
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1918

TO
HIS GRACE THE MOST NOBLE
ARTHUR, DUKE OF WELLINGTON,
MARQUESS OF DOURO,
MARQUESS AND EARL OF WELLINGTON,
VISCOUNT WELLINGTON OF TALAVERA AND OF WELLINGTON,
AND BARON DOURO OF WELLESLEY ;
FIELD MARSHAL IN THE ARMY,
COLONEL OF THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF HORSE GUARDS,
MASTER-GENERAL OF HIS MAJESTY'S ORDNANCE,
GOVERNOR OF PLYMOUTH,
KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER,
KNIGHT GRAND CROSS OF THE MOST HONORABLE ORDER
OF THE BATH,
GRAND CROSS OF THE ROYAL HANOVERIAN GUELPHIC ORDER,
KNIGHT OF THE ORDER OF ST. ESPRIT OF FRANCE,
PRINCE OF WATERLOO,
DUKE OF CIUDAD RODRIGO, &c. &c.

MY LORD DUKE,

*In each particular, save misfortune,
(from which, may Heaven continue to shield your Grace)
the parallel between the existing Hero of Britain and the
Hero of my Poem, (each being the most distinguished*

warrior of his time, as well as the illustrious promoter and supporter of his Country's glory,) rendering your Grace the most appropriate personage to whom I can dedicate my present effort ; and the circumstance of my being an officer in the department over which your Grace presides, affording me an additional claim to so flattering an honor ; I entreat that your Grace will deign to accept it as a cordial, though humble, tribute of the most profound respect, from

Your Grace's

Most obedient,

And most devoted,

Humble Servant,

JOSEPH LUNN.

July, 1823.

NOTE.

IN preparing, for the press, the following production, which was written upwards of six years ago, the Author deems it expedient to apprise the critical reader of its being the first effort of his pen, either as a poet, dramatist, or translator; and, also, to state that, although he has thought proper to denominate it "*A Dramatic Poem*;" (an appellation which, he trusts, its structure will render admissible) he has neither the wish, nor the power, to conceal the circumstance of its having been originally intended for *an acting Tragedy*: that fact, (together with those of its having been accepted by the present Manager of Covent Garden Theatre, and approved by another distinguished Tragedian of high literary repute,) as well as the cause of its non-representation, being on record before the Public.*

* Vide Morning Herald, Friday, 14th June, 1822.



AMOR PATRIÆ.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

PORTICO OF THE SUBURBAN PALACE OF THE CONSUL
MANLIUS, HAVING A FLIGHT OF MARBLE STEPS IN
FRONT.

The Lictors, waiting to attend the Consul, are arranged on each side, and, behind them, a number of Citizens.

Enter HORTENSIVS and DECIUS, meeting.

DECIUS.

Good morrow, good Hortensius; well encounter'd.
What think'st thou of our newly chosen Tribune?
Will he do honor to his stubborn functions?

HORTENSIVS.

I doubt it not. Although his years are few;
If he be honest, (as I think he is)

And well resolv'd to advocate our rights ;
His fortitude shall amply compensate
The daily minish'd fault of unripe age.

DECIUS.

Jove grant that he may merit our election!

HORTENSIVS.

To day he hath assum'd the garb of office.
Erewhile I saw him pass into the palace ;
And I remark'd (as oft I have of late)
That his deportment has become more grave
Than it was wont to be. Haply the change
Is wrought by care for his momentous duty.
That it may prove so is my fervent wish :
But yet, methinks, there is an air of grief ;
A gloomy pensiveness upon his brow ;
As if some hidden woe oppress'd his heart.

DECIUS.

Whate'er superior qualities may grace
The heads which long experience hath made grey,
Clear vision is the attribute of youth.
Thine age hath nearly thrice the span of mine,
Yet, I dare swear, I can divine the cause
Of young Licinius' late despondency.

HORTENSIUS.

Come, let me profit then by thy discernment.

Whence is the cloud which low'rs upon our friend?

DECIUS.

(Perceiving ATTILIA at a distance.)

Hist! dost thou know yon lady who approaches?

HORTENSIUS.

If my dim sight and memory fail me not,

It is the daughter of the ill-starr'd Regulus:

But, I confess, I somewhat am surpris'd

To see her thus in public, and alone;

For (self-immur'd) she seldom hath been seen

To pass beyond the threshold of her house

(Save to perform some duties of devotion)

Since the disaster which, five years ago,

Robb'd her and Rome of father and defender.

*[ATTILIA enters and stands on the lowest step of
those in front of the Portico, looking towards
the Palace.]*

Sorrow hath reft her of the healthful bloom

Which once was wont to mantle on her cheek:

Her mien hath lost its youthful sprightliness;

And her whole frame, by patient, ceaseless grief,

Is now so placid, wan, and statue-like,
That, viewing her, one almost might suppose.
She had become, like frozen Niobé,
Affliction's monument.

DECIUS.

Alas ! 'tis true !

Yet, either all the tears her eyes have shed
Have not suffic'd to quench their native fire,
Or Cupid, fluttering round their humid lids,
Hath pierc'd our Tribune with a tear-dipt shaft,
By the same wound inspiring love and sadness.

[*LICINIUS appears at the Portico.*

But see, Licinius comes ! Let us retire ;
And, by their converse, thou shalt be convinc'd.

[*HORTENSIUS and DECIUS retire to one side and
mix with the Citizens, and LICINIUS comes
down the steps.*]

LICINIUS.

Attilia here ! sweet lady, whence is this ?
'Midst Lictors and plebeian crowds to find
The lovely daughter of great Regulus,
Ne'er met the farthest wand'ring of my thoughts.

ATTILIA.

On these cold steps (emblems of Roman hearts)
I anxious wait the Consul's coming forth;
That I may greet him with my tear-swoln eyes,
And call a blush into his conscious cheek.

[Both coming forward.]

Trust me, Licinius, 'tis no longer time
For ceremonious homage. Five long years
My sire hath groan'd in Carthagénian bonds,
And not a bosom in ungrateful Rome
Seems touch'd with grief for his captivity.
Alone I weep in memory of his fate.
Should *I* be silent, who shall plead his cause?

LICINIUS.

Nay, be not thus unjust! where is the heart
Which sighs not for Attilius' liberty?
Where is the Roman who would not esteem
The conquest of all Africa too dear,
Bought at the cost of such a citizen?
I speak not for myself; for I have ties
Which cannot fail to link me to his love.
He is the sire of her whom I adore!
He was the patron of my tender youth!

He (kind preceptor of my ripening years)
Guided me through the glorious school of arms,
And whatsoe'er my grateful heart can boast,
Worthy of Rome, was all by him inspir'd.

ATTILIA.

And yet I have not seen that even you—

LICINIUS.

A private humble citizen, till now,
What had avail'd my feeble instances ?
'Twas not ambition, or a thirst of gain,
Induc'd me to obtain a Tribune's power.
'Twas to enhance th' importance of my voice,
And so secure the object next my heart.
Now, vested in th' insignia of my rank,
I will demand in all the people's name—

ATTILIA.

Measures so violent let us reserve
To meet extremities ! we must not now
Raise tumults 'twixt the Senate and the people.
Too well we know their several jealousies.
Each one doth claim supreme authority,
And each doth oftentimes abuse its power.
There is a smoother path ! 'tis public news

That, speedily, they do expect in Rome.
An orator from Carthage: Even now,
To hear his message, in Bellona's Fane
The fathers are assembled. That despatch'd:
Manlius (if so his heart could be inclin'd)
Might urge the justice of my father's ransom.

LICINIUS.

Do thy too sanguine hopes make thee forget
The ancient rooted animosity
Which Manlius entertains t'wards Regulus?
And dar'st thou think he will espouse the cause
Of one whose rival he hath ever been?

ATTILIA.

The Consul is a Roman; therefore trust,
His virtuous spirit will disdain to arm
His private quarrel with his public power!
Let me but speak to him and thou shalt find—

LICINIUS.

If then thou art resolv'd to seek his presence,
Why pause before his porch? for, though I fear
Thy prayers will find no passage to his heart,
Thy name and rank may doubtlessly command
A ready ingress at his palace doors;

And 'twould displease him to accost him here,
Mingling amongst the vulgar populace.

ATTILIA.

Nay, 'tis my wish that he should meet me thus :
That (though he be confounded and surpris'd)
In public he may hear and answer me.

[A flourish of Trumpets within the Palace.]

LICINIUS.

He comes !

ATTILIA.

Leave, me Licinius !

LICINIUS.

Nay, not thus ;

Without one tender look, or one kind word.

ATTILIA.

For once e'en thus ; for now my aching heart
Is, as a pure and consecrated shrine,
Wholly devoted to my father's wrongs ;
Nor must it, at this moment, be possess'd
By any sentiment but filial duty.

LICINIUS.

Adieu ! and may success attend thy suit.

[Exit LICINIUS.]

[MANLIUS (attended) comes from the Palace, advances to the front, and is about to go off, when ATTILIA addresses him.]

ATTILIA.

Manlius, I pray you to arrest your steps;
And, for a few short moments, hear me speak.

MANLIUS.

And is it possible Attilius' daughter
Can think that such a spot befits her presence?

ATTILIA.

Long as Attilia could a father boast
In liberty and Rome, it was not meet:
But abject stations best become the maid
Whose father is a slave!

MANLIUS.

What is thine errand?

ATTILIA.

What is mine errand! Say, how many years,
(The wonder of the earth and shame of Rome)
In servile chains, is Regulus to languish?
Months, years, nay lustres, roll unheeded by,
And ye forget that he's in slavery.
What crime hath he committed to deserve

Such barbarous oblivion of his name ?
Is it the love which caus'd him to prefer
His country to his children and himself ?
Is it because his uncorrupted heart
(Magnanimous and just by Nature's gifts,
Yet more ennobled by his poverty)
Hath known no object but his country's glory ?
What citizen that ever breath'd this air
Can Regulus forget ? What part of Rome
Is not a silent monument of him ?
The streets ? how many times have they been proud
To kiss the wheels of his triumphal Car ?
The Forum ? there he hath dictated laws !
The massive walls wherein the Senate meets ?
They can bear witness to his patriot voice,
Breathing sage counsels for the public weal !
Oh, Manlius ! hie thee to the Capitol,
Or view the sacred Temples of the Gods,
And tell me who adorn'd each lofty dome
With costly off'rings cull'd from foreign spoil,
And banners of each subjugated foe.
These very Lictors who surround thee now,
And these rich purple robes which swell thy pomp,

Were once appendages of Regulus !
And will ye leave him to expire in chains ?
Shall he have nought save my invalid tears ?
Oh, Regulus ! Oh, Rome ! Oh, black ingratitude !

MANLIUS.

Thy grief is just Attilia, but unjust
Thine accusation : We, as well as thou,
Feel deep affliction for thy father's loss ;
For well we know how galling is the yoke
Of barb'rous Carthage to the fallen chief.

ATTILIA.

No, 'tis not *Carthage* who is barbarous !
She doth but crush a cruel enemy,
But *Rome* casts forth a faithful citizen !
She recollects how oft he made her bleed ;
But *Rome* forgets how he hath bled for *her* !
The one doth wreak her vengeance on the man
Who oft hath made her choicest warriors yield ;
The other punisheth the chief whose arms
Have wreath'd a laurel chaplet for her brow.
Now say, is Carthage barbarous, or Rome ?

MANLIUS (*sarcastically.*)

Wilt *thou* be pleas'd then to direct our Councils ?

ATTILIA.

Let the whole Senate, with collective voice,
Offer to Carthage, by th' ambassador,
Barter of slaves, or ransom for Attilius !

MANLIUS.

Thy speech doth well become a daughter's love;
But I must act as shall become Rome's Consul.
And 'twill behove me to examine first,
If such request can be to Carthage made,
Consistent with the honor of our name.
The soul though great, the hand though born to rule,
When long to servitude and chains inur'd,
Are less afflicted by their destiny.

ATTILIA.

Where didst thou learn this rigid argument,
Wherewith to reconcile the fate of slaves ?

MANLIUS.

Not by experience, I thank the Gods,
And yet 'twas taught me by the enemy ;
Whose once proud chiefs, now vassals to our state,
Yield ample testimony of its truth.

ATTILIA.

Nay, Manlius, leave this specious sophistry ;

And, still indulging thy malicious hate,
Say that my father's freedom would displease thee.

MANLIUS.

What moves thee, lady, thus to rail on me?
Am *I* to blame because thy potent sire
Suffer'd his prowess to be overcome?
Or, is it fault of mine that he doth still
Remain the pris'ner of our ruthless foe?

ATTILIA (*with warmth.*)

Remember that, before he was subdued,
Thou didst receive some lessons from his hand,
Which should have taught thee—

MANLIUS.

Madam, I must hence.

Doubtless ere this the Senate is assembled.
If thou the other fathers canst inspire
With less austerity towards thy suit,
They can accomplish what thou dost desire;
Nor will my opposition aught avail:
Mine is a Consul's—not a Sovereign's voice.

[*Exit MANLIUS preceded by the Lictors, and
followed by HORTENSIVS, DECIUS, and
Citizens.*]

ATTILIA (*sola.*)

At length my harrass'd mind has certain proof,
That from the Consul I have nought to hope ;
And one expedient only now remains,
To court the succour of the populace.
Oh, Regulus! on what a slender thread
Thy liberty and life do now depend !

[*Enter BARCIA hastily.*]

BARCIA.

Attilia! Madam!

ATTILIA.

Wherefore in such haste?

BARCIA.

The orator from Carthage is arriv'd !

ATTILIA.

We did expect as much : but tell me why
His coming should inspire such ecstasy?

BARCIA.

Not *that*, but other tidings, which I bring,
Will fill thy heart with rapture and surprise.

ATTILIA.

Impart them !

BARCIA.

Regulus is with th' ambassador.

ATTILIA.

My father!

BARCIA.

Aye.

ATTILIA.

I dare not yield belief
To such transporting news! I fear thou dost
Deceive me; or hast been thyself deceiv'd.

BARCIA.

I saw him not, but 'tis on every tongue.

[Enter PUBLIUS.]

PUBLIUS.

Joy, sister, joy! Attilius is in Rome!

ATTILIA.

Thank the propitious Gods for this blest hour!
Where is he, Publius? Guide me to his arms.

PUBLIUS.

As yet 'twould be in vain; for I pronounce,
From his reception of myself e'en now,
That, until Manlius and the Senators
Have heard the message which he brings from Carthage,
He will not hold one moment's conference
With friends or kindred.

ATTILIA.

Where didst thou behold him?

PUBLIUS.

As Questor 'tis my duty to provide,
When foreign messengers are sent to Rome,
Such entertainment as befits their rank.
Hearing that one from Carthage did approach,
I hasten'd to receive him at the port :
But how shall I describe the joy I felt,
When I beheld my honor'd father's face ?

ATTILIA (*eagerly.*)

What said he? What said'st thou? Oh! haste to feed
My craving ear with each particular.

PUBLIUS.

Already had he stept upon the shore
When I arriv'd ; and on the Capitol
(Which from that spot doth partly meet the eye)
He bent his steadfast gaze. On seeing him,
I swiftly ran, with palpitating heart,
To kiss his hands and welcome him to Rome.
The words "dear father" died upon my lips ;
For, hearing me, he turn'd away his face ;
Recoil'd from my embrace ; and, with that voice

Which oft hath struck our enemies with awe,
Said "Slaves can ne'er have fathers' rights in Rome."
I strove to speak ; but, stifling my appeal,
He, with reproving eye and hurried speech,
Ask'd if the Senators had met, and where ;
Which, having heard, he op'd not more his lips,
But quitted me abruptly, and besought
The Carthaginian to prepare his guards
And hasten t'wards the Temple. Thus inform'd,
I flew to give intelligence to Manlius.
Where is he ?

BARCIA.

But a few short moments since,
He bent his way towards Bellona's Temple.

ATTILIA.

And have we then, oh brother ! to deplore
That Regulus returns to us a slave ?

PUBLIUS.

'Tis even so ; but thus much have I learn'd,
That, by the enemy, he hath been charg'd
To manifest her fervent wish for peace ;
And that his future destiny depends
Upon his own exertions to obtain it.

ATTILIA.

But will Rome listen to the proffer'd terms ?

PUBLIUS.

If thou, like me, hadst seen how Rome doth greet him,
Thou wouldst not have a doubt of his success.
Mad with excess of joy, the populace,
In crowds impassable, fill up the streets :
With eager haste they urge each other on :
Each, to his neighbour, points the hero out ;
And smiles of welcome play on every face.
By what endearing names I heard him call'd !
And many an eye was moisten'd with a tear,
In pity for his long captivity.
Oh, sister ! what a spectacle was this,
To rouse the tender feelings of a son !

ATTILIA.

Where is Licinius ? Let me not delay
To pour the happy tidings in his ear.
With watchful care his sympathetic soul
Hath e'er been forward to partake my grief ;
And now that transport swells my grateful heart,
'Tis still imperfect until shar'd with him.

[Exit ATTILIA.]

PUBLIUS (*going.*)

Adieu, sweet Barcia !

BARCIA.

Nay, I pray thee, stay ;

And tell me, if thou canst, the stranger's name.

PUBLIUS.

Hamilcar, as I'm told.

BARCIA (*aside.*)

Benignant Heaven !

PUBLIUS.

E'en the bare mention of Hamilcar's name
Doth seem to chase the roses from thy cheeks ;
And was it then the memory of him,
Which made thee still reject *my* proffer'd love ?

BARCIA.

Oh, Sir ! so kind and so compassionate,
Attilia and thyself have ever been,
That Barcia's grateful heart hath never known
Aught of captivity except the name ;
And 'twould be criminal if, in return,
I should deceive thee in thy generous suit :
Listen then to an artless narrative,
While I unveil the secrets of my soul.

PUBLIUS.

Spare, I conjure ye, the recital now ;
For plainly I perceive that 'twill involve
A prohibition of my fondest hopes.
Let not the foretaste of my future woe
Poison the sweets of this auspicious day !
E'en though a rival do possess thy heart,
Oh ! give not utterance to the certainty ;
But let the lesser misery be mine,
That I may still possess the power to doubt.

[*Exit PUBLIUS.*

BARCIA.

And dare I then indulge th' ecstatic hope
That presently I shall behold Hamilcar ?
The first, the only idol of my soul !
But if my conscious heart doth thus expand,
While only I anticipate his presence ;
With what tumultuous joy 'twill swell my breast,
When first his manly form shall meet my eye.

[*Exit BARCIA.*

SCENE II.

A STREET IN THE SUBURBS OF ROME.

(Enter a crowd of Citizens, shouting.)

CITIZENS.

Huzza! huzza! All hail and welcome Regulus!

[Enter the Embassy from Carthage.]

[REGULUS and HAMILCAR enter together about the middle of the Procession, and ASBALDUR, (attended by two Negro Slaves) at the end.]

[In crossing the stage, ASBALDUR looks attentively and indignantly, first, at the Citizens, and then at the surrounding buildings.]

[The Citizens continue shouting.]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A STREET IN THE SUBURBS OF ROME—THE CAPITOL
IN THE BACK GROUND.

*Enter ASBALDUR, attended by his two Negroes—the
Negroes remain at the back of the Stage.*

ASBALDUR comes forward.

ASBALDUR.

So, this is Rome ! imperious mighty Rome !
The spacious den of that remorseless band,
Who (showing still their wolfish origin)
Spread their voracious legions through the world,
To spoil the land and feast on human blood.
Who, not content with all the precious gifts
Which Heaven hath shower'd upon their native soil,
Traverse the seas to ravage foreign climes :
Crush, with their iron rod, each weaker state :

Exact the tribute from each prostrate foe :
Nor limits place to their ambitious lust,
Till all mankind are bow'd beneath their yoke,
And earth and ocean lie within their grasp.

Yet strangely diverse are the scenes I view,
From what I oft have heard the tongue of Pride
Proclaim them to the ear of Ignorance.

Where'er I turn no objects strike my sight,
So great as those which busy fancy form'd.
Upon the sordid throng, whose noisy shouts
Welcom'd their fallen minion to his home,
I found no stamp of origin divine :
Nor do my long expectant eye-balls ache,
In gazing on their vaunted Capitol.

Gods! when I think upon my bleeding country :
Her desolated plains, her plunder'd towns,
Her violated Fanes and slaughter'd sons,
By these contemptuous Romans ; I could weep ;
But the fierce fire which rages at my heart,
Dries up each wonted lachrymary spring.
Oh ! that this single arm possess'd the power
~~To make them~~ feel an injur'd nation's vengeance !

The thought's presumptuous as the wish is vain !

Let me forget the many kindred ties
Which have been sever'd by these curst invaders.
Sleep on ye warriors in your silent graves ;
Ye fell like men, opposing steel to steel !
But I have treasur'd up a sister's wrongs,
Which call with ceaseless voice for retribution :
And now kind Fortune's hand hath thrown me here,
'Twere madness to neglect the golden chance.
Should I find one amongst these Roman dames,
Worthy to be my weeping sister's slave,
(Though war eternal should succeed the act)
She shall be mine by cunning or by force.

I seek not beauty, symmetry, or youth ;
So some illustrious senator or chief,
Shall call her mother, sister, wife, or daughter :
Let but her loss excite a pang as keen,
As those which prey upon Asbaldur's breast ;
'Tis all I ask of the avenging fates.
Now to behold the haughty Roman Senate ;
And hear my tarnish'd country's messenger
Sue, like a mendicant, for coward peace.

[Exit, followed by the Negroes.]

SCENE II.

THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE OF BELLONA. SEATS
FOR THE SENATORS ON ONE SIDE, AND FOR THE
EMBASSADORS, &c. ON THE OTHER.

LICTORS GUARD THE SEVERAL ENTRANCES, THROUGH
SOME OF WHICH ARE SEEN THE CAPITOL, THE TI-
BER, &c.

*MANLIUS, PUBLIUS, and the Senators, discovered
standing.*

MANLIUS (*to PUBLIUS.*)

Regulus comes, and with th'embassador !
The Carthagenians then desire a peace.

PUBLIUS.

Yes ; or, at least, the mutual interchange
Of all the captives, taken in the war.
One or the other of these boons obtain'd,
My father will regain his liberty :
But if indignant Rome doth both refuse,
He, to inhuman Carthage, must return,
To expiate his failure by his blood.
He seal'd the promise with a solemn oath,

And, ere the embassy did thence depart,
He saw the implements of death prepar'd :
But surely Roman hearts can ne'er permit
That Regulus—

MANLIUS.

Be silent ! they are here !

[The Consul, PUBLIUS, and the Senators take their seats, and a place next the Consul is left vacant. The Lictors separate and admit HAMILCAR, REGULUS, and ASBALDUR, who having passed, they again close to guard the entrance, on the outside of which are seen the Carthaginian Ambassador's Suite and a crowd of Citizens. As soon as REGULUS arrives within the Temple, he stops, and remains in a musing posture.]

HAMILCAR.

Attilius, wherefore dost thou not advance ?
Is not this spot familiar to thine eye ?

REGULUS.

It is ; but, in approaching it with awe,
I pause to meditate how chang'd my state,
From what I was, when I beheld it last ;
To what I am, returning to it now.

HAMILCAR (*to MANLIUS.*)

The Carthagenian Council doth present
Health to Rome's Consul and her Senators ;
And, anxious to conclude our hostile feuds.
Doth send conditions for our future peace.

MANLIUS.

Be seated, stranger, and explain at length
The substance of thy mission to our state.

[*HAMILCAR sits.*]

And thou, Attilius, come and occupy
The station which, by former right, is thine.

REGULUS.

First tell me, who are these ?

MANLIUS.

They are the Fathers.

REGULUS.

And who art thou ?

MANLIUS.

How ! hast thou still to learn ?

Or I usurp this seat, or I am Consul.

REGULUS.

And is it fit that, by the Consul's side,
Amidst the Senators in council met,
A slave of Carthage should presume to sit ?

MANLIUS.

Rome doth forget the rigour of her laws,
When, in that slave, she doth behold the man
Whose skill and valour have erewhile achiev'd
Her proudest conquests and her richest spoils.

REGULUS.

Rome may forget, but *I* remember it !

PUBLIUS (*rising.*)

Your pardon, Manlius, I resign my seat.

REGULUS.

Wherefore doth Publius strive to quit his duty ?

PUBLIUS.

My duty bids that I should stand erect,
Where'er my honor'd father dares not sit.

REGULUS.

And are your customs then so chang'd in Rome,
That, when assembled on affairs of state,
Ye dare remember private courtesy ?
Ere I departed hence for Africa,
It had been deem'd a crime.

PUBLIUS.

My honor'd sire—

REGULUS.

Resume thy place, and learn to merit it
By conduct worthy the exalted post.

PUBLIUS.

Had education ne'er inform'd my mind,
E'en Nature's instinct would have taught my heart
To reverence the presence of my father.

REGULUS.

Thy father died, when Regulus was vanquish'd!

[*PUBLIUS sits.*]

MANLIUS (*to HAMILCAR.*)

Now, Sir, proceed: we are prepar'd to hear you!

HAMILCAR.

Mature deliberation hath induc'd
The Senators of Carthage to elect
The captive Regulus to speak their will;
And whatsoever terms he shall propose,
Are ratified by me in their behalf.

MANLIUS.

Then, Regulus, speak thou!

HAMILCAR (*aside to REGULUS.*)

Remember, Sir,
That Carthage hath in pledge thy solemn oath!

REGULUS (*aside to HAMILCAR.*)

I do remember, and shall hold it sacred.

PUBLIUS (*aside.*)

May the bright Goddess of this holy Pile
Inspire him with resistless eloquence !

REGULUS.

Thus, Fathers, I am tutor'd to declare:
If ye will grant that Carthage shall retain
Whate'er advantage she doth now possess ;
On this condition, by your voice confirm'd,
She then doth proffer and desire a peace.
If to comply with her request in this,
Be still repugnant to the will of Rome,
My mission doth instruct me to entreat,
That all the prisoners, on either side,
May, by exchange, be to their homes restor'd,
And terminate their long and painful exile.

The duties of my embassy perform'd,
In having given her wishes to your ear :
My patriot soul now rises to my lips,
And urges me, thus loudly, to declare ;
If Rome act worthy of her glorious self,
She will disdain them and reject them both.

HAMILCAR (*starting with astonishment.*)

Immortal Jupiter !

PUBLIUS (*aside.*)

Alas ! my father !

REGULUS.

I will not strive, by argument, to shew
The ills which would result from your compliance ;
Nor to elucidate a fact so plain,
That, if the enemy do now adopt
Such urgent measures to obtain a peace,
'Tis *fear* which moves her thus to supplicate.

MANLIUS,

But the exchange of captives—

REGULUS.

Grant it not !

The specious name of mutual exchange
Conceals a fraud more perilous to Rome,
Than e'en the shame of an inglorious peace !

HAMILCAR (*aside to REGULUS.*)

Infatuate man !

REGULUS (*replying calmly.*)

I will fulfil my oath !

[*Turning to the Senators.*

I do beseech ye, Fathers, yield them nought ;
Nor stain your memories with such foul reproach :
For, of the many evils 'twould involve,
None is so fatal as a base example.
The honor, valor, constancy of Rome ;
All emulative zeal of martial fame,
By such a deed, would be for ever lost.
What will it benefit the Roman power
That, of her warriors, the ill-fated few
Whom Africa doth still retain in bonds,
Shall bring to Rome, upon their hapless backs,
The scars imprinted by the servile lash,
A livelong stigma of their dire disgrace :
That, for the boon of misnam'd liberty,
Their weapons, still athirst for hostile blood,
They tamely may deposit at their homes,
And, fearing death, endure the conqu'ror's scorn ?
Oh ! 'twould be everlasting infamy !

MANLIUS.

The accents which have fallen from thy tongue,
Are all replete with reason and with truth :
Yet all the dangers which thou dost predict
Are counterbalanc'd by the one great good,
That Regulus will be restor'd to Rome.

REGULUS.

Nay, then I pray thee Manlius hear me still.
Let not thy better judgment be deceiv'd
By the too tender dictates of thy heart.
Regulus feels, as other mortals do,
The weakness of accumulating years.
I could not long be useful to the state :
But great would be the profit to the foe ;
For, most essentially, it would enhance
Her martial prowess, should she repossess
The many vigorous and ferocious men
Whom, in exchange for me, ye would restore.
Commit not, then, a fault so palpable.
Let not your annals (spotless until now)
Proclaim, to generations yet unborn,
That, from your councils, they receiv'd a blot.
The best and longest portion of my days
Hath been devoted to my country's service ;
And Carthage now is welcome to receive
My useless remnant of declining life.
Though she obtain the weak revengeful boast,
To wreak her disappointment on my head ;
To see me bleed, beneath the falchion's edge ;

Or rack my body with protracted torture ;
'Twill check her triumph when she shall behold
That Rome abounds with men like Regulus.

PUBLIUS (*aside.*)

Oh, fatal fortitude !

MANLIUS.

Illustrious man,
We may not urge the vantage of the state,
When justice will not bear the action out :
And justice doth imperiously forbid
Ingratitude to such a citizen.

REGULUS.

Will Rome be grateful for her servant's love ?
Suffer me then to indicate the way.
Oh, Fathers ! these barbarians have presum'd
To hope that I possess a soul so base,
That recreant fear should make me treacherous.
Not all the torments and indignities
Of five years' slavery, 'midst inhuman foes,
Press, like this insult, on my wounded heart.
If then ye e'er did Regulus esteem
Worthy to be compatriot with yourselves,
Revenge this daring outrage on his fame.

To arms, and lead your valiant legions forth !
Rush with impetuous fury on the foe !
Rescue your captive eagles from her grasp !
Pluck, from her Temples, her long-boasted spoils !
Nor let the hostile sword be sheath'd again,
Till vict'ry shall make blunt its sated edge.
Let me, returning thither to my doom,
Behold pale terror, at my country's ire,
Stamp'd legibly upon my murd'rer's brow :
And, joyfully, I shall resign my life ;
If, with my latest breath, I can pronounce,
That Carthage trembles at the name of Rome !

MANLIUS.

A question of such magnitude as this
Doth claim our more profound deliberation,
The which, at further leisure, shall be given :
But, first, we must possess some little space,
To free us from the stupor of amazement.
Ere long our Senate's will shall be convey'd
To thee, and to this courteous messenger.
Now, Fathers, if your thoughts accord with mine,
We will adjourn and supplicate the Gods,
That they direct us in this great decision.

[*MANLIUS and the Senators rise.*]

REGULUS.

How! still in doubt?

MANLIUS.

Aye, unexampled doubt;

Of deep concern and difficult solution.

Despising death, thou wouldst bestow thy blood,

To save the glory of thy country's name :

While she would lose, by sacrificing thee,

The choicest citizen her soil can boast.

Heaven is not prodigal of gifts like thee ;

Nor dare I e'en a sentiment advance,

Whether 'twere nobler for the Roman name

That she should still be deaf to thine advice ;

Or, yielding to thy god-like eloquence,

Forfeit the man who dares to give such counsel.

*[Exit MANLIUS, followed by all the Senators,
(except PUBLIUS) the Lictors, &c. and the
Temple remains free of ingress.]*

HAMILCAR.

And is it thus that Regulus fulfils

The solemn promise which he gave to Carthage ?

REGULUS.

I promis'd that I would return with thee ;

And shall religiously observe my word.

[*Turning to PUBLIUS.*

Now, Questor, guide Hamilcar and myself
To our allotted place of habitation.

PUBLIUS.

Will not my father, when at length return'd,
Glad with his presence his paternal home ;
Whose every tenant, for these five long years,
Hath mourn'd the absence of its captive lord ?

REGULUS.

The bearer of a message from the foe,
Dares not advance within the gates of Rome.

PUBLIUS.

Such prohibition is not for Attilius !

REGULUS.

And wherefore not ? By what prerogative
Claim I exemption from my country's laws ?
It is for all ! for 'twere tyrannical,
Could e'en the mightiest chieftain of the state
Refuse obedience with impunity.

PUBLIUS.

What cruel change calamity hath wrought !

REGULUS.

My *state* is chang'd, but *I* am still the same ;
For slavery can never reach my soul.

Whether the boastful, fortune-favor'd foe,
Load me with servile chains to grace his conquest;
Or grateful citizens of conqu'ring Rome,
Adorn my temples with the victor's wreath;
My constant mind can still look calmly on,
And contemplate, in triumph or in bonds,
The two great objects of a patriot's life,
My country's weal—my honor's purity.

[Exit, following PUBLIUS.]

*[As HAMILCAR is about to follow REGULUS,
enter BARCIA.]*

BARCIA.

Hamilcar!

HAMILCAR.

Barcia!

[They embrace.]

Oh, how blest would be

The day which thus restores us to each other,
Were it not clouded by the dire presage
That we are doom'd to further suffering.
Scarce had I trodden on the Roman soil;
My joy-fraught heart exulting at the thought
Of greeting soon, my long affianc'd love,
When straight the wayward fates again conspir'd

To tear the envied treasure from mine arms.
Th' acceptance of our Senate's proffer'd terms
Which Regulus was hither sent to urge,
~~Hisself~~ doth, with all vehemence, dissuade.

BARCIA.

Malicious friend !

HAMILCAR.

Barcia, I must begone.

The ecstasy I felt, in meeting thee,
Had well nigh caus'd me to forget my duty,
Which now demands that I rejoin Attilius.
I, with affection's eagerness, will snatch
The earliest time for further conference ;
For Love's loquacious when his vot'ries meet.

BARCIA.

Yet we have met, and thou wouldst hence depart,
Nor deign to breathe his accents to mine ear.

HAMILCAR.

I pray thee, Barcia, urge me not to stay.
We may converse, in words, at future leisure.
But surely thou (if still thy heart be mine)
Canst, with a lover's penetrating glance,
Read, through my eyes, the volume of my thoughts ;

While I can learn the secrets of *thy* soul,
Through the kind medium of a parting sigh.

[As HAMILCAR concludes the above Speech, enter ATTILIA hastily.—As soon as ATTILIA enters the Temple, ASBALDUR starts with admiration, retires some paces, and regards her with fixt attention until his exit.]

ATTILIA.

I heard it whisper'd at the Temple's porch,
That Regulus hath shewn himself averse
To all the terms by Carthage sent to Rome !
Say, is it true ?

BARCIA.

Alas ! too true Attilia !

[Exit HAMILCAR.

[In going off, he beckons ASBALDUR to follow him, which he does reluctantly, and looking back at ATTILIA.]

ATTILIA.

Oh ! 'tis insanity beyond compare !
Attilius' self conspires against himself,
And labors to obtain his own perdition !
Where are the Senators ?

BARCIA.

They have adjourn'd
To sacrifice ; but will, ere long, return,
To close their contest and pronounce their will.
Seize then th' occasion ere they reassemble :
Thy skill, thy firmness, and thine eloquence ;
The love of kindred and the faith of friends,
Must all be summon'd to advance thy cause.

ATTILIA.

I will do all thy friendship doth suggest,
And my own sanguine heart shall prompt me to.

[Exit ATTILIA.]

BARCIA.

Should my Hamilcar, spite of all his care,
Be fated to return to Africa,
And leave me here, the captive slave of Rome ;
The burthen of accumulating grief
Would surely crush me to an early tomb.
The bare idea chills my blood with terror.
Yet why do I despair ? why fright my soul
With half-form'd woes and dreams of future ill ?
No, rather let me banish coward fear :
Implore the Gods, and summon to my aid,
One lucid ray of gloom-dispelling hope.

SCENE III.

THE SUBURBS OF ROME.

ON ONE SIDE, THE PALACE DESTINED FOR THE
RECEPTION OF FOREIGN EMBASSADORS, HAVING A
TERRACE IN FRONT. THE CITY OF ROME IN THE
BACK GROUND.

REGULUS discovered walking on the Terrace.

African Guards attending.

(PUBLIUS comes from the Palace.)

REGULUS.

Ha! thou still loitering here? shall it be said
The glory and tranquillity of Rome;
The honor of Attilius Regulus,
Were all at stake, and Publius not in council?

PUBLIUS.

My honor'd Sir, it is not yet the hour
Which was appointed for the Senate's meeting.

REGULUS.

Then hasten thither ere the hour arrives;

For I would have *thee* more than punctual.
And, further, I enjoin thee, on thy duty,
That thou, with all thy rhetoric's force, shalt strive
To win th' unwilling Fathers to my purpose.

PUBLIUS.

How! banish from my heart each tender tie,
And be, myself, the willing instrument
Of thy destruction! I conjure thee, Sir,
Command it not: Have pity on thyself.

REGULUS.

Dost thou then deem my constancy a phrenzy?
Thinkst thou that I alone amongst mankind
Do hate myself, and seek mine own undoing?
If so, thy judgment grossly doth mislead thee.
Equal with every one of human mould,
I wish for happiness and fly from ill:
But thus I estimate the two extremes;
That virtue only can insure the first,
And crime alone doth constitute the latter.
In me, 'twere flagrant criminality
To gain my freedom by my country's loss;
Hence, liberty and life, to me, are ills;
But virtue 'tis to purchase, with my blood,

The greatness and security of Rome ;
Hence bonds and death, my greatest benefits.

PUBLIUS.

But yet our country is not—

REGULUS.

Publius, stay

Thy lawless speech ! Our country is our all !
The complicated glorious machine
Of which we all are the component parts !
'Tis breach of duty, in a citizen,
To prosecute, or e'en to meditate
His own advantage, separate from hers !
Debtor to her for all he doth enjoy,
The only rule his patriot heart should own,
To stamp his actions well or ill perform'd,
Is, as they each may forward or retard
His country's glory and prosperity.
The warrior who doth shed his blood for her,
Giveth not that which is by right his own ;
But doth, in part, return the precious pledge,
Which, from herself, he did receive in trust.
From her doth every citizen derive
His life, his education, and support :

She doth reward each meritorious act ;
Exalt his name, revenge his injuries :
She, like a tender mother, still doth watch,
With anxious care, her offspring's happiness ;
And doth protect him, in his peaceful home,
From all domestic wrong, by wholesome laws ;
From foreign insult, by victorious arms.
'Tis true that, for such benefits bestow'd,
She doth exact our service in return :
And he who would refuse, or e'en repine,
To offer up whate'er he holds most dear,
Knowing that he, by such a sacrifice,
Could add one ray of lustre to her fame,
Deserves not to participate her gifts.
If such a man there be, let him become
The wretched tenant of some dreary waste ;
Companionless and homeless let him range,
Culling his scanty and precarious fare ;
Drag out his sad existence to the close,
And sink to death unpitied and despis'd.

PUBLIUS.

I hear thee with respect and veneration ;
Thy precepts bring conviction to my mind ;

Yet all their force can ne'er persuade my heart,
Whilst I remember that I am a son.

REGULUS.

Weak subterfuge for one of Roman birth !
If Manlius, Brutus, and Virginius,
Had sought the feeble plea that they were fathers,
Our history had lack'd so many heroes.

PUBLIUS.

'Tis true ! yet such unshaken fortitude
Hath e'er belong'd to grave maturity :
Nor do the Roman annals boast one son,
Who, for his country, sacrific'd his father !

REGULUS.

Then shall the greater merit still be thine,
To give posterity the bright example.

[The sound of Trumpets is heard.]

And hark ! yon clarion's welcome sound proclaims
Our friends returning from the sacrifice.
It is the summons to resume thy duty.
Away !

PUBLIUS.

Oh, pardon, Sir ! Great Nature's law
Prohibits mine obedience to thy will !

REGULUS.

If 'tis thy wish that I abjure thy kindred,
Still shew thyself averse to my desire :
But, if thou'dst have me proudly call thee son,
And own thee worthy of thine origin ;
Respect my former mandate and depart.

[PUBLIUS falls on his knee in an attitude of supplication, as if about to offer further remonstrance.]

REGULUS.

I'll hear no more ! Thy conduct be thine answer !

[REGULUS turns hastily from PUBLIUS and enters the Palace—PUBLIUS goes, reluctantly and thoughtfully, off at the opposite side.]

SCENE IV.

IN THE FOREGROUND, THE OUTSIDE OF THE TEMPLE OF BELLONA, (WITH THE DOOR OPEN, DISCOVERING PART OF THE INTERIOR) AND IN THE BACK GROUND, THE SUBURBS OF ROME. AT THE FURTHEST CONVENIENT DISTANCE, A TEMPLE SITUATED ON AN EMINENCE.

MANLIUS, the Senators, the Priests, &c. discovered returning from the Temple in sacrificial procession.

In addition to the sacred Vases, Banners, &c. the Head and Skin of the Victim (adorned with wreaths of flowers) should be carried nearly at the head of the Procession.

As soon as the Senators arrive in front of the Temple of Bellona, MANLIUS motions them to enter, which they do.

[MANLIUS, Priests, &c. exeunt on the opposite side.]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

AN APARTMENT IN THE PALACE.

(Enter ASBALDUR.)

ASBALDUR.

Heavens, what a paragon of female charms !
'Tis true I oft have heard our slaves extol
The dazzling beauties of the Roman maids ;
Yet e'en the visions of my fervent mind,
Ne'er pictur'd earthly being half so fair.

When first she pass'd the portal of the Temple,
She look'd like some celestial messenger,
Sent to declare the sacred walls profan'd
By our humiliating embassy !

She is the daughter of Attilius too ;
And sister of a youthful Senator !
Her lovely form might grace a monarch's throne :

E

Nor could imagination hope or wish
A worthier prize, to feed my just resentment !
And yet, methinks, instead of pure revenge,
A softer passion hath assail'd my heart,
Striving to mingle there its pois'nous sweets !
Well, be it so ; welcome the vivid flame.
I will not check the tumult of my blood ;
But pluck, with eager hand, the beauteous flower,
Then, to my menials, cast the parent plant.

[*Musing.*

Can she be won by wooing ? Will her ear
List to a tale of Carthaginian love ?
It shall be tried ; for 'twere the better way,
Could she be wean'd from this her native spot,
And, by a specious, well-dissembled suit,
Made to unite her destiny with mine,
And so depart in secrecy and silence :

[*With vehemence.*

But should she spurn my humble protestations,
And treat my passion with indignant scorn ;
Then open violence shall tear her hence,
To taste the hardships which her countrymen
So oft inflict on captive innocence. [Exit.

SCENE II.

ANOTHER APARTMENT IN THE PALACE.

REGULUS (*solus.*)

Now the important crisis doth approach ;
And apprehension clogs my boding soul,
Lest, re-assembled for this grand debate,
The conscript Fathers should be wavering still.
Oh ! ye protective Deities of Rome,
Direct their minds on this momentous day !

[Footsteps without.]

Who's there ?

[Enter MANLIUS, speaking to his Attendants.]

MANLIUS.

Lictors retire ! guard every entrance ;
And let no person, whatsoe'er his rank,
Dare to intrude upon our privacy.

REGULUS.

Manlius ! what mean this visit and this caution ?

MANLIUS.

Let me embrace thee with a brother's love,

Thou best of men : thou still unconquer'd hero !

[*MANLIUS advances to embrace REGULUS, who avoids him.*]

REGULUS.

What wouldst thou do ? Rome's Consul condescend
Thus to—

MANLIUS.

I come not with a Consul's right,
But as thy fellow citizen, Attilius !
One who adores thy constancy and virtue !
Thine ancient rival and thine enemy,
Comes to proclaim his own humility,
And here confess that thou hast vanquish'd him :
To own th' injustice of his former hate,
And crave the honor to become thy friend.

REGULUS.

With great and generous minds 'tis ever thus !
Like me, the prostrate, tempest-beaten plants
No longer feel the fury of the storm,
Or haply, oft'times, are again rais'd up,
By the same wind which bow'd them to the earth !
The noble acquisition of thy love,
Is one more fruit of my captivity !

MANLIUS.

It is! 'twas *that* which first subdued my heart,
And taught me to appreciate thy worth :
For now, in bonds, more great thou dost appear,
Than, heretofore, I ever did behold thee.
Rome oft hath seen thee victor of the foe ;
But, now, thou hast achiev'd a greater conquest,
For thou art victor of thyself and Fortune.
Thy dear-bought laurels did awake mine envy,
But now, thy chains command my reverence :
An hero, then, I did acknowledge thee,
But, now, thou dost appear a Deity!

REGULUS.

Enough, enough Sir! the most rigid virtue
Is scarcely proof against the force of praise,
Utter'd by lips of such exalted worth.
Accept my gratitude, that thou art pleas'd,
With thine illustrious friendship, to diffuse
A brighter radiance o'er the few short days,
Which now remain of servitude and life.

MANLIUS.

The few short days? No, rather let me hope
That I may long preserve thee to the state :

For I will exercise my utmost power
To gain th' exchange which renders thee to Rome.

REGULUS.

Is *this* the earnest of thy proffer'd love ?
And how, if I were still thy deadliest foe,
Couldst thou do worse than thwart my fondest aims :
Defraud me of the only benefit
Which Heaven hath left, to compensate my shame.
To Rome I came, not to lament my fate ;
To shew my chains and move her to compassion :
I came to save her from the fearful chance
Of granting what her honor doth forbid.
If thou canst give no better proofs of love,
Retract thy words and give me back thy hate.

MANLIUS.

But Rome's refusal will secure thy death.

REGULUS.

And sounds that name so harsh to Manlius' ears ?
I have not *now* to learn that I am mortal !
All that the foe hath power to rob me of,
Is that which shortly must be Nature's due.
I do but make a voluntary gift,
Of what, ere long, would be resistless tribute.

'Twill shew the world I liv'd but for my country ;
And, when my life no more could profit her,
I made my death contribute to her welfare.

MANLIUS.

Oh, sentiments sublime ! oh, happy soil,
Which can produce such sons ! where is the man
Who could withhold his love from such desert ?

REGULUS.

If thou wilt love me, love me like a Roman !
Be this the compact of our amity ;
We each shall make a sacrifice to Rome ;
I yield my life and *thou* must yield thy friend :
For 'tis but just that thou shouldst also bear
Some share of suffering for the State's advantage.
Now haste thee to the sage patrician Council ;
But, first, assure me here, upon thy truth,
That thou wilt second and defend my vote.
Promise me this ; for, on these terms alone,
Will I embrace thee and requite thy love.
What is thine answer ?

[*MANLIUS remains some moments in deep
thought and much agitated.*]

MANLIUS.

Yes ; I will aspire
To emulate thy worth. I promise thee !

REGULUS.

Then, Manlius, I esteem thy friendship's pledge,
The choicest gift of the indulgent Gods !

MANLIUS.

Now, were I monarch of the universe,
I would exchange the splendor of my crown,
To be, in chains, as great as Regulus !

REGULUS.

Let not the precious moments pass in waste.
Convoke the Senate ; urge them to despatch :
And bear in mind that I confide to thee,
My peace, ~~mine~~ honor, and my dearest hopes.

MANLIUS.

Adieu, thou glory of fam'd Tiber's shore !

REGULUS.

Farewell my friend.

[*They embrace, and exit MANLIUS.*]

REGULUS.

Now I respire again !
All bounteous Heaven smiles on my great design !

[Enter *LICINIUS*.

LICINIUS.

My honor'd patron ; full of cheering hopes
I come to greet thee.

REGULUS.

Thanks my generous youth !

LICINIUS.

How have I wrought in thy behalf !

REGULUS.

Indeed !

LICINIUS.

Didst thou suppose me so ungrateful, Sir,
That all the obligations of my youth
I could forget, and in the very hour
When my poor service could advantage thee ?
Ah no ; they are indelibly impress'd
Upon the tablet of my memory.
Thou wert, at once, my tutor, chief, and father :
My first conductor in the path of honor :
Thou didst prepare—

REGULUS.

In brief what hast thou done ?

LICINIUS.

Sought to preserve Rome's brightest gem.

REGULUS.

Thy means ?

LICINIUS.

I watch'd the Fathers, at the Temple's ingress :
And, as they enter'd, drew each one apart,
Beseeching that they would unite to save thee.

REGULUS.

What do I hear ! Protective Pallas ! *Thou ?*

LICINIUS.

Not I alone. Oh, let me not defraud
Another's merit of its just reward.
All that my grateful efforts could perform,
Was far exceeded by the fair Attilia.

REGULUS.

Oh, Gods ! *Attilia* too ?

LICINIUS.

Rome doth not boast,
Within the compass of her spacious walls,
A brighter pattern of true filial piety.
Oh ! hadst thou witness'd thine Attilia's zeal ;
With what decorum she pour'd forth her grief,
Mingling reproof with prayers, and tears with praise.

REGULUS.

What said the Senators ?

LICINIUS.

Who can be deaf
To such a suppliant?

[Seeing ATTILIA without.]

See where she advances :
Her airy step bespeaks her mind at ease,
And infant hope comes sparkling in her eye.

[Enter ATTILIA.]

ATTILIA *(as she enters.)*

My dear and honor'd father,

*[REGULUS extends his arms to receive her, and
she falls into his embrace.]*

REGULUS *(raising his eyes.)*

Potent Jove !

From thy celestial throne, look down with mercy ;
And let the armour of thy sovereign power,
Now shield thy servant's heart from further weakness.
Aid me to burst from Nature's eager hold ;
And let this fair, frail piece of thy creation
Participate thy gift !

[He detaches himself gently from her embrace.]

My gentle daughter,
Thou hast done wrong.

ATTILIA.

Nay, father, say not so :

I cannot bear *thy* chiding.

REGULUS.

Oh, my child !

How fainly would I while my eve of life,
In mutual cherishings and fond discourse
With my lov'd offspring : but the time demands
Far other thoughts than the bland interchange
Of filial and parental tenderness ;
And, 'stead of nestling, like the timid dove,
I, like the lordly eagle, must take wing ;
To guard our aerie from approaching danger.

ATTILIA.

The Gods forbid !

REGULUS.

It is my steady purpose :

Therefore repeat not thine officious suit.
Let me not number 'mongst mine enemies
Attilia's name.

ATTILIA.

I father ! *I* thine enemy ?

REGULUS.

Are they not so who counteract my wish,
And madly struggle to oppose my counsels ?

ATTILIA.

Is't proof of enmity to seek thy good ?

REGULUS.

'Tis not for *thy* weak judgment to decide
What is my good and what mine injury.
Who summon'd *thee*, to aid by thine advice
The public cares ? Who constituted *thee*
Protectress of thy father's destiny ?
Whence came it that—

LICINIUS.

Oh, Sir, this is too much.

REGULUS.

Ha ! dares Licinius speak ? His best defence
Had been continued silence : *that*, at least,
Had made some show of shame and penitence.
Eternal powers ! a Tribune !

LICINIUS.

Aye, a Tribune ;

Who, in resisting thine inhuman fate—

REGULUS.

Peace ! he is worthless of the Roman name,
Who gives his suffrage to an act of baseness :

[*To ATTILIA.*

Nor will I e'er confess, that blood of mine
Flows in a heart devoid of Roman virtue.

[*To both.*

By Mars I swear that, since my freedom's loss,
My fetters ne'er have gall'd me until now.
Give me not acts of love, but proofs of firmness.
Rouse all your energies ! blush for the past !
Retrieve your error, and relieve my heart
From the deep wound your weakness hath inflicted.

[*Exit REGULUS.*

ATTILIA.

Thinkst thou, Licinius, that there e'er was born
A woman whose misfortunes match'd with mine ?
To shew a heart imbued with filial love :
To make a father's cause my only care ;
And, ceaselessly, to toil in his behalf,
Would seem a merit, yet it is reprov'd,
As if it were a crime of deepest dye.

LICINIUS.

E'en be it so ! console thyself Attilia.
Repent not of thy pious offices !
Thy father hath his duty to perform,
And we have ours. Although contempt of life
May, in Attilius, be consummate glory :
Yet 'twould be impious, both in thee and me,
To see him tottering on Perdition's brink,
And not press forward to prevent his fall.
Fear not his wrath ; 'twill be of short duration.
Oft have I seen, upon the martial field,
The dart-struck soldier, struggling hard with death,
Accuse of cruelty the friendly hand,
Which, with officious care, did probe his wound ;
For promis'd health, inflicting present pain :
And thus thy father : though he now doth chide ;
Yet, when our task of love shall be fulfill'd,
His anger shall give place to gratitude ;
And he will bless thee that thou didst preserve him.

ATTILIA.

Yet with such bitterness he doth reproach me,
That all my courage fails me in his presence.

LICINIUS.

Say ; wouldst thou rather that he should return
To meet the fate prepar'd for him in Carthage ;
Than that he should remain, with life, in Rome,
Though, with unceasing tongue, he might upbraid thee ?

ATTILIA.

Ah no ! his death would break my suffering heart.
Let him but live, and poor Attilia still
Shall arm her soul with hope and fortitude,
Or to appease, or to endure his anger.

LICINIUS.

Yes, he *shall* live. Dry up those envious tears,
Nor let them steal the lustre from thine eye :
For, as the pilot, in an unknown sea,
Watches, with anxious care, some friendly star,
To guide him safely to his destin'd port ;
So, by thine orbs, when sparkling with delight,
Thy fond Licinius steers his happy course ;
But, should a cloud of grief o'erspread thy brow,
And rob them of their wonted brilliancy,
He sinks in all the shipwreck of despair.

[*Exit LICINIUS.*

ATTILIA.

Ah, 'tis too true that fortune knows no bounds,
In the dispensing of her frowns or smiles !
Either, with more than prodigal excess,
She loads us mortals with her choicest gifts ;
Or, with Affliction's rod, doth bow us down,
Until we fall beneath her scourge's weight.
Now the unhappy sufferer am I
Of her displeasure : Whereso'er I turn ;
The prospect, blacken'd by the clouds of fate,
Portends a storm ! Oh, ye relentless Gods !
I give my bosom to your direst bolts :
Here let them strike, but save, oh save my father !
Great Jove, respect in him thine earthly image,
And spare, to Rome, one living emblem still,
Of truth, of valor, and of constancy.

*[Enter ASBALDUR behind—he comes forward
bowing with humility.]*

ASBALDUR.

Lady, the most obsequious of thy slaves,
Entreats thy pardon for encroaching thus
Upon thy leisure, and prefers a hope

That thou wilt deign receive his humble prayer
With patient audience.

ATTILIA.

Give it utterance, Sir!

You have a courteous stranger's claim to welcome.

ASBALDUR.

Madam, I had not dar'd be thus abrupt;
But that our transient sojourn here in Rome,
Precludes the forms of ceremonious greeting.

ATTILIA.

Already have I spoke your surest welcome:
Pray you reveal the purpose of your visit.

ASBALDUR.

I dare not hope that my untutor'd tongue,
The constant inmate of a boist'rous camp,
Shall e'er possess the skill to frame its words
To suit the softness of my present errand.

I am a soldier, Lady; mark me well!
And, though our Senators have sent me here,
To swell the number of Hamilcar's train,
Mine is the blood of princely lineage.
I have possessions too, in ~~and~~ gold,
To glaze the eye of

Now, to these blessings, add my martial power ;
And tell me if thy kindness can forgive
Thy suitor the inevitable fault
Of being born beneath an Afric sky.

ATTILIA.

Why urge you this to me ? or wherefore ask
Forgiveness for an accidental stain,
Which e'en the heart of tyranny itself,
Can never deem a stigma or a crime ?

ASBALDUR (*in an impassioned tone.*)

If 'tis not criminal in *thy* esteem,
I will proclaim it as my greatest boast.

[*He kneels.*]

Sweet excellence, my speech shall now be plain ;
For plainness best assorts with honest truth,
'Midst all the promis'd miracles of Rome,
One only wonder met my ravish'd eyes;
And 'twas thy lovely self ! my bounding heart,
In the full glow of love and native warmth ;
Boldly disdaining coy prudential rules,
Flew to thy feet, to own its vassalage ;
And to invoke thy pity and thy smiles.

ATTILIA (*with extreme indignation.*)

How! love from thee? presumptuous madman, rise;
Nor longer venture to insult mine ears!

[*She turns from him, retires a few paces, then turns towards him.*]

Nay, I believe not that thy words are sooth:
True love is ever tinctur'd with respect;
Thine is the raving of a troubled reason.

ASBALDUB (*rising.*)

Lady, I do confess the crimson flood
Creeps not, with Roman coldness, through our veins.
The passion which we feel, we freely own:
We struggle not to stifle our desires;
But, promptly, aim to compass their fulfilment.

ATTILIA.

Sir, I entreat that thou wilt leave my presence;
Nor still pursue these frantic rhapsodies.
Nought, but thine arrogance, had dar'd to hope
That one who boasts the blood of Regulus,
Could close her eyes, to all th' illustrious youth
Who strive to gain the honor of her hand,
And madly grant it to a sable suitor.

ASBALDUR (*approaching her.*)

Lady, I thank thy tongue for that reproach !
The swarthy tinge upon thy servant's brow,
No emblem is of the possessor's soul.

The deepening shades which mark the human race,
Are like the varied tints on Nature's fruits :
Some with the rose, or gay carnation's dye,
May tempt the longing eye of kindred beauty ;
Yet, oft, their flavor is less grateful found,
Than the pure sustenance which lies conceal'd
Within the sober cocoa's russet husk.
Are not the purple clusters of the vine
As pulpy, as refreshing, and as sweet,
As those which boast the amber's sunny glare ?
Is not their juice as potent and as bright ?
And when thou dip'st that fresh ambrosial lip
Into the teeming goblet's sparkling tide,
Dost thou refuse th' exhilarating draught,
Because, perchance, it bears a tawny hue ?

ATTILIA.

If neither gentle bidding nor command,
Suffice to bridle thy licentious tongue :
If thou wilt neither quit my sight, nor cease

To persecute me with thy ribald suit ;
My absence must protect me from thy rudeness.

[Exit ATTILIA hastily.]

[ASBALDUR follows her nearly to the door, then turns.]

ASBALDUR.

Ha ! so abrupt ! and so determin'd too !
Shall I be scoff'd, rejected, and contemn'd ?
No, by my wrongs, spite of this towering pride,
When next we meet, she shall not 'scape me thus.

[Exit.]

SCENE III.

A GALLERY IN THE PALACE.

A DOOR IN THE CENTRE, AS LEADING TO AN INNER
APARTMENT.REGULUS (*solus.*)

Ha ! dost thou palpitate my heart ? through all
The dangers and vicissitudes of life,
That motion ne'er assail'd thee until now.
Hast thou defied the tempests of the deep ;
The utmost ire of Mars ; nor shrunk before
The horrid monsters of fell Africa ;
And now, with trembling, dost await thy sentence ?
Yet thou hast reason ; for, unto this hour,
Thou ne'er hast seen my glory in such peril.
But why this love of fame : this thirst of glory ?
Doth it not sometimes lord and tyrannize
Over some better feeling of the soul :
And should not this, like every passion else,
Be bridled in its overweening force ?
No, no ! 'tis coward's reasoning ! uselessly

The man was born, who lives but for himself:
And 'tis that noble, heaven-born sentiment,
Which doth instruct us to forget ourselves,
When we devote our lives to others' service.
Every enjoyment which this earth affords
Issues from that great source: 'tis *that* alone,
Rescues us mortals from the abject rank
Which we should hold without desire of honor:
Makes us invulnerable to the fates:
Preserves our cities and extends our power:
By its allurements, swells the happy crowd
Of eager followers, in the train of virtue:
Changes ferocity to gentleness:
Makes man aspire to imitate the Gods!
'Tis *that* which— [Seeing *PUBLIUS* without.

Ha! Publius returns!

[Enter *PUBLIUS*.

Thy news?

What says the Senate? what is its decree?

PUBLIUS (*aside*.)

Why must a son perform this painful duty!

REGULUS.

Still silent!

PUBLIUS.

Witness Heaven, I would be dumb!

REGULUS.

Shrink not, but briefly tell my country's will.

PUBLIUS.

The Fathers are inflexibly resolv'd;
And, with repulsive scorn, refuse each offer.

REGULUS.

Then the bright genius of this happy state
Hath triumph'd and dispell'd the clouds of doubt.
Thanks to the Gods, I have not liv'd in vain!
Welcome, thrice welcome the refreshing time,
When, for a moment's space, my soul may quit
The rugged path of stern philosophy!

*[PUBLIUS weeps—REGULUS turns affectionately
towards him.]*

REGULUS.

Come, let me clasp thee. *[They embrace]*

Let those piteous tears
Be, to thy grateful parent's throbbing breast,
A sovereign balm for all the aching wounds,
Inflicted by the iron hand of duty.
Oh, my brave son, thou ow'st more gratitude,

This day, unto my heaven-supported frowns,
 Than e'er thou didst, through life, to my caresses :
 For, had my inward conflict been betray'd,
 When, torn by struggling Nature's potent grasp,
 I, with ungentle speech, and brow severe,
 Rebuk'd the waverings of thy fortitude :
 Had the keen impulse of paternal love
 Burst from the confines of my bleeding heart ;
 O'erflown my eyes, or met thine ear in groans,
 Mingling with thy too poignant sympathies ;
 Thy unripe strength had sunk beneath the act,
 Which stamps thy boyhood with the name of hero.

I must away and seek th' ambassador.
 Our errand's finish'd : the great work's complete :
 And nothing now remains but to depart.

PUBLIUS.

Most honor'd, most unfortunate of parents !

REGULUS.

How ! dar'st thou call unfortunate the man
 Who, through the steady course of a long life,
 And, e'en in death, can benefit his country ?

PUBLIUS.

My country I adore, but Nature still
 Compels me to deplore my father's chains.

REGULUS.

Life is itself a bondage! Every one
Hath his peculiar fetters. If the lot
Of any mortals 'waken thy compassion;
Commiserate the fate of new-born babes,
Not that of Regulus.

PUBLIUS.

But brutal Carthage,
With vengeful wrath, will rob thee of thy life.

REGULUS.

And end my servitude.

[*Going.*

Farewell my son!

PUBLIUS.

Canst thou refuse to grant that I perform
The last, the melancholy offices—

REGULUS.

A more important duty claims thy care!
Whilst I am hastening to depart from Rome,
Cheer and support the sorrowful Attilia.
Let not th' exposure of the daughter's grief,
Sully the splendor of the father's triumph.
Her tenderness for me hath known no bounds;
And, should her mourning shew the same excess,

Chide her not, Publius ; for, in female hearts,
We must not hope for virile constancy.
Strengthen her mind by counsel and example :
Direct her steps, and let her find, in thee,
All that my death would else deprive her of.
Thus I bequeath my daughter to thy care.
Thee I confide unto thyself.—But, ah !
I see thy courage falters : I believ'd
That I should find more firmness in thy soul.
Shall the event belie my confidence ?
Ah, no ; thou art a Roman and *my* son !
Deceive not, then, thy father's fondest hopes !
Make me not blush when I remember thee !
Let me but feel assurance that, in thee,
I leave a worthy heir to my example ;
And joy's bright gleam shall gild my eve of life,
When I reflect that, though Attilius dies,
His Publius still shall tread the path of glory !

[Exit REGULUS by centre door.]

PUBLIUS.

Worthless, indeed, would be the sacrifice
Which I now make to the renown of Rome,
If I, with ease, could crack affection's bonds.

But 'tis not so : Witness immortal Jove,
 In yielding up my parent's precious life,
 The virtuous struggle lacerates my heart:
 Yet the keen torments which I now endure
 Enhance the merits of my constancy.

Then courage Publius ! the ascent is steep,
 But perseverance still shall climb the summit.
 The blood which circles in thy veins demands it :
 And the great pattern, plac'd before thine eyes,
 Summons th' exertion of thy every nerve.

At first, obedient to frail Nature's impulse,
 Thou didst recede some paces from the track
 Which should conduct thee to thy lofty goal ;
 But now philosophy shall arm thy soul
 To emulate thy father's heroism

[Exit Publius]
 When I shall see thee in the field, my son,
 I'll know thee by thy father's sword and shield.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

[Exit Publius]
 When I shall see thee in the field, my son,

I'll know thee by thy father's sword and shield.

[Exit Publius]

When I shall see thee in the field, my son,

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

AN APARTMENT IN THE PALACE.

A DOOR IN THE CENTRE OF THE SCENE, AS BEING
THE ONLY ENTRANCE.

*ATTILIA discovered, sola.—She looks anxiously
towards the door.*

ATTILIA.

Still, still no tidings of my father's fate !
How dreadful are the moments of suspense ;
When hope and terror, struggling for the sway,
Rend, by their conflict, the expectant heart !

[*Enter ASBALDUR.*

[*He approaches her, bowing obsequiously, as in
the former scene.*]

ASBALDUR.

Gentle Attilia, if my erring feet,

Urg'd by the quenchless passion of my soul,
 Once more o'erstep the bounds of courtesy ;
 Let not thy reprehension fall on me,
 But on those charms which cause me to offend.

ATTILIA (*haughtily.*)
 Must I again endure thy hated presence ?
 Is no spot sacred from thy bold intrusion ?
 Shall I be hunted like some timid fawn,
 And baited by thine insolent advances ?

ASBALDUR.
 Call not my supplication insolence :
 'Tis but the confidence which love inspires.
 I do beseech thee, Lady, frown not thus.
 Let the pure fire of those bewitching eyes,
 Dispel the envious umbrage from thy face.

ATTILIA.
 If thou wouldst chase displeasure from my brow,
 Vex me no longer with thy fulsome converse.
 ASBALDUR (*kneeling.*)
 Can one so lovely be inexorable ?
 Shall my adoring and insatiate eyes
 No longer gaze upon their idol's charms ?
 Wilt thou not suffer that my prostrate knee,

Some little further space, shall press the spot
Which hath been kiss'd by thine angelic feet ?
Can nought suffice to gain one gracious word ?

ATTILIA.

Nought that thy odious tongue hath power to offer.

ASBALDUR (*rising and speaking aside.*)

I will essay by one more artifice !

[*Approaching her with confidence.*

Yes, Lady, yes ; I have a powerful bribe ;

Which, if thy heart be not of adamant,

Shall win thy smiles and placate thy disdain.

The Roman Senate hath pronounc'd its will ;

And Regulus returns to Africa.

ATTILIA.

Monster, 'tis false ! [Suddenly recollecting]

And yet, perchance, 'tis true.

Then, wherefore thus prolong the painful doubt ?

I'll to the Temple.

[*She attempts to go—ASBALDUR places himself
between her and the door.*]

ASBALDUR.

By omniscient Heaven,

'Tis true as thou art fair : therefore remain,

Till I unfold the purpose of my heart.

ATTILIA.

Ha ! doth thy brutal violence pretend
To bar my passage ?

ASBALDUR.

Madam, 'tis to pour
The balm of consolation in thine ear.
Let but thy heavenly form reward the act,
And, when thy sire shall reach the Afric shore,
E'en though the scymitar be rais'd in air,
Ere the prompt hand shall guide it to his neck,
By every Carthaginian God, I swear,
To snatch the victim from my country's wrath,
Preserve his life, and give him to thy arms.

ATTILIA.

Instead of gratitude receive my curse :
And know that, if our Senate hath ordain'd
My sire's return, (which all the Gods forefend)
Attilia rather would behold his death,
Than owe his safety to an African.

ASBALDUR (*assuming a ferocious air.*)

Nay, then away disguise ! Lady, no more
Of these offensive and vain-glorious taunts.
I am no longer thy submissive wooer.

The fawning, kneeling sycophant is chang'd
To an adventurer who builds his hopes
Upon a surer basis.

ATTILIA.

Ha ! what mean'st thou ?

ASBALDUR.

That thou'rt within my power ! no Roman arm
Is near this chamber to oppose my will.
That if thou wilt not yield to my desire,
Force shall exact what prayers have fail'd to gain.

ATTILIA (*with dignified contempt.*)

Slave, I despise thee and defy thy power !
Virtue demands no safeguard but herself.
Arm'd with her shield and this, my bosom friend,
I dare th' approach of dastard treachery.

[*She draws a dagger from her bosom.*]

ASBALDUR.

Think not, proud maid, to scare me by thy steel;
Nor vainly hope, that when I am resolv'd
To pluck the treasur'd honey from the bee,
I dread the puncture of her puny sting.
Thou must depart with me.

[*ASBALDUR advances and attempts to seize her hand.*]

ATTILIA.

Coward, beware!

[She strikes and wounds his left arm—he steps back, claps his hands twice, and his two Negro Slaves rush in.]

ASBALDUR *(to the Slaves.)*

Now Slaves, ye know your task: be brief and follow.

[The Slaves overpower and disarm ATTILIA, and seize her in their arms. She shrieks “LICINIUS, PUBLIUS.”—One of the Slaves takes off his mantle and throws it over her face—they then bear her off, following ASBALDUR.]

SCENE II.

THE OUTSIDE OF THE PALACE.

Enter ASBALDUR, from the Palace, followed by his two Slaves, bearing ATTILIA—and, at the same time, HAMILCAR and Guards at the front entrance.

ASBALDUR.

Hamilcar here! Curse on this accident!

[He hurries the Slaves off, at the side opposite to HAMILCAR, and continues speaking to them at the wing.]

Slaves, to the ships. Exert your utmost speed.
Perform this duty to your master's wish,
And all your future service shall be light.

HAMILCAR (*advancing towards him.*)

How now Asbaldur? Whence this perturbation?

[Enter BARCIA from the Palace—she runs to HAMILCAR.]

BARCIA.

Welcome Hamilcar! Heaven hath sent thee here,

To save thy Barcia's patroness and friend.
Attilia hath been borne away by force :
I heard her voice, in accents of distress,
Shrieking for aid.

HAMILCAR.

Guards, hasten to the rescue.
Pursue those slaves and bring them to my presence :
I'll wait ye here.

[Exeunt Guards, followed by BARCIA.

(To ASBALDUR.)

Ruffian, is this *thy* act ?

ASBALDUR.

Sir, 'tis a feat which I am proud to own :
Nor shall the enterprize be foil'd by thee.

[Drawing his sword and advancing towards

HAMILCAR in a menacing attitude.]

Recal the soldiers and revoke thy words,
Or, by the vengeance of my ardent soul,
The throat which breath'd them ne'er shall utter more.

HAMILCAR.

Put up thy sword, rash fool ; and give me thanks,
That I have sav'd thee from the name of *robber*.

ASBALDUR.

My thanks are here! [*Brandishing his sword.*

Thou Roman-blooded slave.

Draw swiftly forth thy weapon, lest thy hand,
Keeping the sluggish temper of thy heart,
Should be too tardy for thy life's defence.

[*ASBALDUR advances furiously upon HAMILCAR, who, at length, draws his sword. An obstinate combat ensues, in which HAMILCAR kills ASBALDUR—when ASBALDUR falls, enter PUBLIUS.*]

PUBLIUS.

What means this clash of arms? The cause, Hamilcar?

[*Enter Guards, with the Slaves, and followed by ATTILIA and BARCIA.*]

HAMILCAR (*pointing to ATTILIA.*)

Ask yonder lady: she will best explain.

ATTILIA (*addressing HAMILCAR.*)

Sir, with a heart so full of other cares;

I dare not hope to thank thee as I ought.

[*Turning to PUBLIUS.*

Publius, we owe to this kind stranger's arm,

Thy sister's safety.

HAMILCAR (*to PUBLIUS.*)

Roman, hadst *thou* done
Thus much for *me*, in like extremity?

PUBLIUS.

For thee, or for the meanest of thy slaves,
would perform an action such as thine,
The common duty of humanity.

ATTILIA.

Brother, no more : let us not waste a thought
Upon ourselves : how fares it with our father?

[*PUBLIUS turns from her.*

Oh! I can never teach my trembling heart
To bear the confirmation of my fears.
Must I believe the agonizing news?

PUBLIUS.

'Tis even so : Attilius' doom is seal'd!

[*HAMILCAR retires up the stage, and gives directions to his Soldiers, some of whom convey the Slaves away, guarded, while others carry off the body of ASBALDUR.*]

ATTILIA.

Have I then been betray'd on every side?
Where is my father? Whatsoe'er his fate,
I will attend his steps.

PUBLIUS.

Sister forbear !

Let not thy clamorous grief offend his ear.

ATTILIA.

And dost thou hope, by *thy* commanding voice,
To stay me here ?

PUBLIUS (*taking her hand.*)

This let me hope Attilia ;

That, with profound respect, thou wilt remember—

ATTILIA.

I do remember nothing, Publius, now,
But that I am a daughter. Loose your hold !

PUBLIUS (*still holding her hand.*)

Oh, sister, learn to fortify thy mind
With resignation to high Heaven's decree.
Our noble father's conduct points the way,
How to endure the shafts of adverse fate ;
Nor are we worthy of the birth we boast,
Unless we imitate his great example.

[*HAMILCAR comes forward.*]

ATTILIA.

My brother too so cold ? the man whose heart
Should share my grief and echo all my groans !
I comprehend it not !

HAMILCAR.

Let me explain
The real cause of all this seeming valor.
His flame is there ! *[Pointing to BARCIA.]*

If Regulus departs,
Barcia remains ; and thus he is repaid.

PUBLIUS.

This thought of me ! Eternal powers what outrage !

HAMILCAR.

Perhaps, in order to attain this end,
He us'd his utmost efforts to dissuade
The Fathers from accepting the exchange.

PUBLIUS.

The thought is worthy of an African.

HAMILCAR.

Because 'tis true.

PUBLIUS.

Hear me. Art thou inform'd
That I am arbiter of Barcia's fate ?

HAMILCAR.

I know it well. Thy mother, some years since,
Obtain'd her from the Senate, in a gift :
And, when she died, her slave devolv'd to thee.

PUBLIUS.

Now hear what use I make of my dominion.
By Venus' self, I lov'd her more than life,
But less than honor! This, I know full well,
Will seem a paradox to one like thee;
But I will pluck this vile suspicion's bud,
And bar all plea for calumny in others.
I give thy Barcia freedom! take her hence;
And be as blest as *Africa* can make ye!

BARCIA.

Dares my rapt soul give credence to my senses?

HAMILCAR.

My Barcia free! Oh pardon generous Sir—

PUBLIUS.

Now learn, Hamilcar, how we love in Rome!

[*Exit PUBLIUS.*]

HAMILCAR.

This magnanimity shall meet a rival!
Africa too can haply boast some heroes!
Our pride though less, our virtues equal theirs;
Nor is the path of fame unknown to us.
Far from the Capitol of haughty Rome,
The Gods find myriads of the human race,

Worthy to share their favor and protection !

Barcia, farewell : I will return anon.

[Exit HAMILCAR.]

[Enter LICINIUS, crossing the stage hastily.]

ATTILIA.

Licinius, whither in such urgent haste ?

LICINIUS.

To save thy father !

ATTILIA.

By what miracle ?

LICINIUS.

When we would combat the extremes of ill,

Our arms must be proportion'd to the peril.

[Exit LICINIUS.]

ATTILIA.

Barcia, accept my best congratulation :

May every moment of thy future life,

Be sweet as that which gave thee liberty.

BARCIA.

Thanks, Lady, thanks ! I should be blest indeed,

Could I behold thy generous heart at rest.

May we not hope ?

ATTILIA.

I fear Licinius aims
At some great project, fraught with dreadful peril.

BARCIA.

Hamilcar, struck with the great act of Publius,
And stung to th' inmost soul by his reproach;
Hath now resolv'd upon some generous deed,
To shew the ardour of his gratitude.
Oh, to what risks he may expose himself!

ATTILIA.

Ye Gods, protect and second my Licinius!

BARCIA.

Preserve Hamilcar all ye friendly powers!

ATTILIA.

My every fibre vibrates with alarm!

BARCIA.

Nay, do not *now* despond; for one faint gleam
Of cheering hope hath broken through the gloom.

ATTILIA.

But, yet 'tis not the soul-reviving ray
Of Heavens serene. It is a transient flash
Of languid light'ning, in a pitchy sky:

A distant flame, which, in its birth obscur'd,
Reveals the danger which it cannot lessen.

[*Exit ATTILIA.*

BARCIA.

Whilst I essay'd to animate Attilia,
I talk'd of courage with a trembling heart;
My strength was greater when my hopes were less;
For, then, I did but dread a future ill;
But, now, I fear to lose a present blessing.
When we embark upon the stormy deep,
We are resign'd to struggle with its waves,
Or e'en to sink beneath its whelming force;
But doubly cruel is the fate of those
Who, sailing on a pure unruffled stream,
Are wreck'd so near the haven of their hopes:

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A SALOON IN THE PALACE.

LARGE FOLDING DOORS IN THE CENTRE, OPEN TO:
THE GARDEN.

[*REGULUS and African Guards discovered.*]

REGULUS.

Why this delay? doth not Hamilcar know
The Senate's will? Let him be quickly found.

[*Exeunt two soldiers.*]

We must depart. He can have nought to hope
By further stay, nor have I more to wish.
Our tardiness doth now become a crime
In him and in myself.

[*Enter MANLIUS.*]

Oh, my kind friend,
Most welcome to my arms! without thy aid
My honor was in danger. But for thee
I had not kept my chains. To thee I owe
The glorious consummation of my hopes.

MANLIUS.

Yet we must part, and I must lose my friend.

REGULUS.

Thy friend were lost indeed should he remain.

MANLIUS.

Ah, wherefore did the Fates so long delay
To snatch the veil of envy from mine eyes,
And let me see the value of thy love?
My life doth not present one deed t'wards thee,
But 'twas the growth of malice.

REGULUS.

Oh let me,
With grateful impulse, name one bright exception;
Thy one great act, which marks our friendship's birth,
More than outweighs an age of enmity.
Yet, if thy noble nature still doth prompt
The granting more, more will I ask.

MANLIUS.

Speak on.

REGULUS.

Each duty of a *citizen* fulfill'd;
I now remember that I am a *father*.
I leave in Rome (my only legacy)

A son and daughter—Publius and Attilia.
Next to my country, these must ever claim
The first and tenderest feelings of my heart.
I have observ'd them, with a parent's eye,
And, joyfully, beheld their budding virtues.
As yet, the tender plants are immature,
And both require the aid of prudent culture.
Heaven hath decreed that I shall not complete
The pleasing task: Be thou my substitute;
And undertake, for me, the pious charge.
Deign but to be their monitor and guide,
And, thus, thy generous friendship shall produce
The father's glory and the children's welfare.

MANLIUS.

Yes, Regulus, thy wish shall be obey'd.
Thy friend shall watch with unremitting care,
The growing graces of those precious germs.
In Manlius, they shall still possess a father,
Who, (though he cannot boast of worth like thine)
At least, shall equal thee in tenderness.
Be it my task to indicate the path
Of Roman virtue to their willing minds.
Nor will the toil be great. Their youthful hearts,

Fashion'd by Nature in her noblest mould,
Will need no beacon to direct their steps,
Save the recital of their sire's exploits.

REGULUS.

Now, Manlius, thou hast set my heart at rest.

[*Enter PUBLIUS hastily.*

PUBLIUS.

Manlius! Father!

REGULUS.

Publius! quick: thine errand?

PUBLIUS.

Rome is in tumult, and the populace,
With angry shouts, forbid that you depart.

REGULUS.

Can they desire the ruinous exchange?

PUBLIUS.

Neither exchange nor peace do they demand;
But 'tis their will that you remain in Rome.

REGULUS.

That I remain! How? violate my word?
My sacred word—my Heaven-recorded oath?

PUBLIUS.

The cry is universal in the streets,

That oath or promise doth not bind in faith,
When given to those who are themselves perfidious.

REGULUS.

What! shall we quote the crimes of Africa,
To palliate a Roman's perfidy?
If base example were excuse for crime,
Our laws could ne'er pronounce offenders guilty.

PUBLIUS.

The sacred Augurs are assembled Sir;
And their decision will resolve the doubt.

REGULUS.

I need no oracle to guide *my* judgment.
I gave my promise and I *will* depart.
Of peace or of exchange, Rome had the power
Of full deliberation: my return
Admits no umpire but my own free will.
That was a public, *this* a private, cause.
Rome is aware I am not what I *was*;
And she usurps a power beyond her own,
If she command the servant of another.

PUBLIUS.

At least refrain from urging thy departure,
Until the Augurs publish their decree.

REGULUS.

Nay, rather will I hasten to embark ;
For, by delay, I tacitly should own
That I acknowledge their authority.
Guards, to the port ! Manlius ! my son, adieu !

MANLIUS.

Attilius, take this caution from thy friend.
Venture not yet amidst the boisterous crowd.
Should the plebeians forcibly detain thee,
Their rashness will be call'd the act of Rome,
And branded with the name of treachery.

REGULUS.

Must I, then, fail to keep—

MANLIUS.

No, thou shalt not :

But let me first go forth and strive to calm
The popular commotion : 'twill subside
When they behold that 'tis the Consul's will.

REGULUS.

Manlius, I wait th' event upon thy faith.

MANLIUS.

Enough ! I know thy heart : confide in mine ;
Nor fear that I shall now desert the track

Which I have chosen to advance thy fame.
 Remember that I too was born a Roman :
 That the same fire which animates thy breast,
 And leads thee on to glory and to death,
 Glows, also, in the bosom of thy friend,
 With equal warmth. Heaven hath not deign'd 'tis true,
 To grace my name with thine illustrious chains:
 Yet, tho' in vain I wish to share thy fate,
 I will convince thee that I can deserve it.

[*Exit MANLIUS.*

REGULUS.

Is the bright flame of patriotism extinct?
 Have the immortal Gods abandon'd Rome;
 That, thus, her citizen must toil and pray;
 Ere he obtain permission from herself,
 To save her glory from impending risk,
 And pay the ransom of his plighted honor?
 Wherefore— [Turning and perceiving PUBLIUS.

But, ah! dost thou remain my Publius?
 Canst thou so tamely leave unto my friend
 To stem the torrent of the madden'd throng?
 Fly, and unite with Manlius: let me boast
 That, when my reputation was at stake,
 I ow'd its preservation to my son.

PUBLIUS.

Whate'er my honor'd father doth command
I will perform ; but 'tis a dreadful office.

*[Exit PUBLIUS.]**[Enter HAMILCAR.]*

HAMILCAR.

At length Attilius—

REGULUS.

I divine the cause

Of the reproaches which are on thy tongue !
Let not the tumult of the populace
Awaken thy suspicion of my faith ;
For here, in solemn truth, I do affirm,
In repetition of my former oath,
That death alone shall compass my detention.

HAMILCAR.

Wherefore suppose that I suspect thy truth ?
I utter no complaint, nor do I know
What is the tumult which thy speech doth aim at.
No, Regulus ; I come to let thee know
That Tiber's shore is not the only soil
Which can give birth to heroes ; and to prove
That great and generous minds are sometimes found,
The growth of Africa.

REGULUS.

This is no time
To waste our breath in useless arguments.
'Twere fitter to collect thy followers :
Speed to the ships, and hasten our departure.

HAMILCAR.

First hear and answer me.

REGULUS.

Oh, patience, patience !

HAMILCAR.

Hath it no share of glory to be grateful ?

REGULUS.

No. To be grateful is a sacred duty.

HAMILCAR.

If, with unshaken soul, we still resolve
To shew our sense of gratitude sincere,
E'en though our lives are menac'd by the act.

REGULUS.

'Tis then exalted to a noble virtue.

HAMILCAR.

Then be the merit of that virtue mine.
Now hear me Regulus : thy generous son,
Burning with love, yet jealous of his honor,

Hath, by a miracle of self control,
Yielded me up my Barcia's liberty.
Now, in return for his munificence,
I will expose me to my country's rage,
And save his sire.

REGULUS.

Thou wilt save me?

HAMILCAR.

Aye.

REGULUS.

How?

HAMILCAR.

By favoring thy flight. I will invent
A specious pretext to withdraw these guards,
And leave thee to escape. Thou shalt remain
Conceal'd, with cautious secrecy, in Rome ;
While, with dissembled anger, I embark,
And sail for Africa.

REGULUS (*aside.*)

Perfidious savage !

HAMILCAR.

Why dost thou not reply? art thou struck dumb
With wonder at my generosity ?

REGULUS.

No.

HAMILCAR.

Thou didst ne'er expect so much from me.

REGULUS.

No.

HAMILCAR.

Yet the author of this noble act,
Had not the fortune to be born a Roman.

REGULUS.

Of that, the act itself is surest proof.

HAMILCAR.

Guards, follow me,

REGULUS (*to the Guards.*)

Stir not a man !

(*To HAMILCAR.*)

Hamilcar;

Accept my gratitude for thy good will,

I will go with thee,

HAMILCAR.

Dost thou spurn my pity ?

REGULUS.

Believe me, I disdain not thy compassion ;

But, rather, from my heart, do pity thee.
Thou dost pretend to dignity of soul,
Yet know'st not what is honor, truth, or virtue.
Thou wouldst perform a meritorious deed ;
Yet, in that deed itself, insultest me ;
And prov'st thyself a traitor to thy country.

HAMILCAR.

A traitor !

REGULUS.

Aye, a base, dishonor'd traitor !
How dar'st thou arrogate unto thyself
The power of granting liberty to me ?
Am I the slave of Carthage, or of thee ?

HAMILCAR.

'Tis not thy province to arraign me thus.
The benefit is thine—the risk mine own.

REGULUS.

I do confess the benefit is great :
To render me a coward and a liar.

HAMILCAR.

Remember, 'tis thy life I would preserve :
Protect thee from a death of ling'ring torture ;
For all the pangs which vengeance can inflict,
Await on thy return to wrathful Carthage.

REGULUS.

Know'st thou, Hamilcar, all the attributes
Which are compris'd within the name of *Roman* ?
That honor is our food, our health, our life :
The spring, the rule, the object and reward
Of all our actions. From that source we learn,
When patriotism and glory lead us on,
To gaze on death without a change of aspect ;
Look with derision on corporeal pain,
Nor shrink from aught beneath the vault of Heaven,
Save a departure from the path of virtue.

HAMILCAR.

Those pompous words strike well upon the ear ;
Yet all thine ostentatious eloquence
Is lost upon thy present auditor.
I have no relish for thy Roman precepts.
Thus much I know, that life is dear to all—

REGULUS.

Sir, thou already hast too much presum'd
Upon my sufferance. Prepare the ships ;
And summon thine attendants to depart.

HAMILCAR.

Ere long thou may'st repent these moody scoffs—

REGULUS.

Barbarian, do thy duty and be silent !

[Exit to the Garden.]

HAMILCAR.

Yes, Regulus, brand my benevolence
With the unseemly name of barbarism.
Heap insults on my head: Thou art in Rome,
And, patiently, I can endure them all.
In Carthage, soon the triumph will be mine ;
And, then, imperious Roman, thou shalt find
Thy punishment shall give thee ample scope
For all thy boasted intrepidity.

[Exit.]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

THE GARDEN OF THE PALACE.

[REGULUS and African Guards discovered.]

REGULUS.

Heaven speed the efforts of my son and Manlius !

[Seeing ATTILIA without.]

But, ah ! what tidings doth Attilia bring,

With cheerful countenance and hurried step ? /

[Enter ATTILIA.]

ATTILIA.

Father, our fate depends upon thyself !

Rome, faithful to thy counsels, will not grant

Peace or exchange ; and yet thou may'st remain.

REGULUS.

With shame, I may.

ATTILIA.

The Augurs have decreed
That thou art arbiter to go or stay.
Thus they pronounce—"Thy faith was given in chains;
" And he who is not free, hath not the power
" To bind himself by promise, or by oath."

REGULUS.

The man who always is prepar'd to die,
Is always free ; and he who doth accuse
Another's power, proclaims himself a coward.
In genuine liberty of soul I swore,
For 'twas my purpose to fulfil my oath :
And, now, it is my purpose to depart,
Because I swore.

[Enter PUBLIUS]

PUBLIUS.

In vain you hope it, Sir !

REGULUS.

Who shall inhibit me ?

PUBLIUS.

The populace.

Their countless force is now beyond control.
In eager crowds they hasten to the port.

To intercept your passage to the ships :
And all the other streets of anxious Rome,
Are quite unpeopled.

REGULUS.

What hath Manlius done ?

PUBLIUS.

He doth, with indefatigable zeal,
Oppose his voice against the general shout ;
But his commands, his threat'nings and his prayers,
Are ineffectual all. His words are drown'd
Amidst the clamour of the multitude.
Each moment adds fresh vigour to their rage :
The pallid Lictors fearfully look on,
Their weapons trembling in their nerveless hands ;
Nor hath thy friend one arm except his own,
To execute the Consular dominion.

REGULUS.

Farewell, Attilia ! Publius, follow me !

ATTILIA.

Oh ! whither, Sir ?

REGULUS.

To chide these frantic men,
Who thus conspire to blast the name of Rome.

Still to preserve the honor of my chains :
To quit this shore, or perish in the effort.

ATTILIA.

Ah! no, forbid it Heaven ! if thou dost leave me—

REGULUS.

Hear me fond maid. Thy feebleness, thine age,
And, most of all, the tender name of daughter,
Have hitherto wrought much upon my heart,
In favor of thy want of fortitude :
But thou hast wept enough ! henceforth, no more.
Let not thy tears unite with frenzied Rome
To rob thy father of his greatest triumph.

ATTILIA.

Canst thou desert thy child without one sigh ?

REGULUS.

I will not forfeit my unsullied right
To the proud names of Roman and of parent,
By leaving to my country or my child,
A pattern of dishonor or of weakness.
The sanguine tenant of thy father's breast
Hath no less love and tenderness than thine :
This only difference doth exist between them ;
Mine is the vassal of my sovereign will,
But thine the tyrant o'er thy yielding judgment.

ATTILIA.

But the affliction, Sir, of losing *thee*—

REGULUS.

Is great, to thee, I know: but 'tis the price
Which thou must pay to the immortal Gods,
For having bless'd thee with the precious boon
Of being born a Roman.

ATTILIA.

Any proof,
Excepting this, I could have borne with patience.

REGULUS.

What proof couldst thou have borne better than this?
Couldst thou go mingle with the Senators?
Assist, by thine advice, their grave debates;
And regulate the fate of Rome in council?
Or, with the crested helm upon thy brow,
Lead forth her marshall'd legions to the field;
Toil 'midst the slaughter of contending ranks,
And bleed in her defence? These are not acts
Which female heroism should e'er aspire to.
If then thou canst not, in thy country's cause,
Endure, with firmness, some calamities;
What other service canst thou render her?

ATTILIA.

Alas, 'tis true ; yet such a sacrifice—

REGULUS.

Requires a bravery of mind, Attilia,
Which seldom doth adorn the name of woman :
Yet thou, who art the daughter of Attilius ;
Thou shalt possess it. [Going.

ATTILIA.

To my utmost power,
I will adhere to thine illustrious precepts :
Then, oh, my father, go not hence in anger.
Leave me not tortur'd with the double pang
That, ere I did resign my father's life,
I forfeited his love.

REGULUS.

No ; such a thought
Shall ne'er remain, to wound thy gentle heart.
Think not, my child, that choler prompts my speech ;
But let th' assurance of my tenderest love
Be as an incense to thy sacrifice ;
While thine obedience to my last behest
Shall be, to me, a balmy, cordial drop,
Sweetening the bitter cup of self-devotion.

Take this embrace as mine affection's pledge ;

[Embracing her.]

And let it arm thy soul to bear the thought,

That 'tis the last I ever can bestow.

*[He suddenly breaks from her embrace and exit,
followed by PUBLIUS.]*

ATTILIA (*sola.*)

The die is cast ! Lie still my fluttering heart !

Ye gushing springs, which, at the call of woe,

Send forth salt streams to scald these aching eyes,

Henceforth be dry, for I must cease to weep !

Arouse my soul and free thee from thy shackles :

Awaken all thy slumbering energies :

Banish each softer passion from thy presence,

For patriotism must reign thine only lord !

Spurr'd into action by my father's wrath,

My birth-right, valor, rushes to my aid ;

Nor shall Attilia be the only branch

Unworthy the great stock from which she sprang.

[Enter BARCIA.]

BARCIA.

'Tis then a truth that, spite of all thy tears ;

In opposition to the Augurs' sentence,

And disregardful of the people's voice,
Regulus will depart.

ATTILIA (*with firmness.*)

E'en so !

BARCIA.

'Tis madness.

ATTILIA.

I pray thee, Barcia, season thy discourse
With more respect, when heroes are its subject.

BARCIA.

How ! is it possible thou dost approve
Of thy proud father's obstinate procedure ?

ATTILIA.

I do adore my father's constant virtue.

BARCIA.

Virtue ! to yield his body up to chains ;
To torture and an ignominious death.

ATTILIA.

Cease to profane that pious sacrifice
By words ungracious. *Ignominious* said'st thou ?
Now, by great Juno's self, in *my* esteem,
Those very chains, that torture and that death,
Shall weave a wreath to decorate his urn,
More rich than e'er adorn'd his living brow.

BARCIA.

Dost thou exult ?

ATTILIA.

Support me, gracious Heaven !

[She weeps.]

BARCIA.

I do confess this strife 'twixt pride and love,
Exceeds my comprehension.

ATTILIA.

Thou say'st well.

The hapless native of a barb'rous soil,
Can never feel, nor e'er can comprehend,
The joy which swells a Roman daughter's breast,
At such accession to her sire's renown.

BARCIA.

If so elated, wherefore dost thou weep ?

ATTILIA.

'Tis but the prelude to my heart's repose.
Oft we behold, in the high vault of Heaven,
Phœbus' bright orb veil'd o'er by envious clouds :
Dense and more dense the gathering vapours rise ;
Spread their dark mantle o'er his azure path,
And transiently eclipse his genial beams.

At length, the sable mass dissolves in showers,
And the effulgent God again shines forth,
With double splendor o'er the gladden'd world.
So shall th'impending clouds of fear and doubt,
Obscuring native valour in my soul,
Be dissipated in a flood of tears,
And leave my bosom tranquil and serene
As the fair face of Sol's ætherial sky.

[*Exit weeping.*]

BARCIA (*sola.*)

Truly this strange avidity for praise,
Hath wrought some wonderful effects in Rome.
Buoy'd by this phantom, which themselves have rais'd,
Each one, at will, can cast affection forth;
And proudly trample on the ties of blood,
As if their hearts were not of mortal mould.
What miracles have pass'd before mine eyes,
In the short space of this eventful day.
Manlius is envious of his rival's chains:
Regulus spurns the pity which would save him:
Attilia glories in her father's death:
And Publius, (ah, that doth surpass belief!)
Intoxicated with excess of honor,

Loves me, yet cedes me to an enemy.
I do admire the heaven-born attribute
Which leads the human mind to acts of greatness;
But, if the virtue of the Capitol
Teaches to yield the idol of our hopes
Without one sigh, or one apparent pang,
I thank the Gods that I am not a Roman.

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

A MAGNIFICENT COLONNADE ON THE BANK OF THE
TIBER.—SHIPS IN THE RIVER READY FOR THE
EMBARKATION OF REGULUS. A PLATFORM LAID
FROM THE SHORE TO THE NEAREST SHIP. PART
OF THE CARTHAGENIAN SUITE ON BOARD.

*MANLIUS (attended by the Lictors) is discovered in
the act of contending with LICINIUS, HORTEN-
SIUS, DECIUS and the Populace, who occupy the
Space between him and the Ships.*

LICINIUS.

Sir, I repeat, it is the will of Rome
That Regulus remains.

MANLIUS.

And am not I ;
Are not the Senators a part of Rome ?

LICINIUS.

The people are the most important part.

MANLIUS.

In noise and number, aye ; but not in wisdom.

HORTENSIVS.

We are the least in nought save cruelty ;
For we, impress'd with gratitude and love,
Resolve to save the life of Regulus.

MANLIUS.

And we determine to preserve his honor.

HORTENSIVS.

His honor, Sir ?

MANLIUS.

Enough ! I came not here
To prate with thee. Ho ! Citizens, make way,

LICINIUS.

I charge ye that ye move not.

MANLIUS.

I command it.

LICINIUS.

And I prohibit it,

MANLIUS.

Ha ! dares Licinius
With open force, resist the Consul's will ?

LICINIUS.

He does, if Manlius dares to urge his will
In opposition to the people's Tribune,

MANLIUS.

That shall be quickly seen. Lictors advance !
Drive these infuriate rebels from the path.

LICINIUS.

Romans, defend yourselves from violence.

*[The Lictors advance, and the Citizens assume
a posture of defence.]*

MANLIUS.

Ye Gods ! are my commands oppos'd with arms !
Where is the majesty—

LICINIUS.

'Tis in the people :

And 'tis an outrage on their dearest rights
That thou dost thwart the universal voice.

[To the Citizens.]

Friends shout your will !

(Citizens shout.)

Attilius' liberty !

MANLIUS.

Hear me, my countrymen. Let me point out—

LICINIUS.

No, no, no, no.

(Citizens shout.)

Regulus shall remain.

MANLIUS.

[Drawing his sword and advancing towards LICINIUS.]

Speak then our swords to your rebellious hearts.

[The Lictors attack the Citizens and a skirmish ensues--MANLIUS and LICINIUS meet in front. MANLIUS wounds LICINIUS, who staggers up the stage and falls; makes signs to the Citizens still to defend the passage, exclaims "Oh, ARTILIA!" and expires. As soon as LICINIUS falls, the Citizens give way; but are rallied by DECIVS, who advances in their front and repeats the shout "REGULUS shall remain;" at which moment, enter REGULUS, followed by HAMILCAR, PUBLIUS, BARCIA and Guards. —PUBLIUS and BARCIA start on seeing the body of LICINIUS. REGULUS views it without emotion.]

REGULUS.

What do I hear! *Regulus shall remain!*

Am I in Rome or in some savage clime?

Must I believe my senses' evidence?

Would ye enforce an act of perfidy,

And choose forth Regulus to play the traitor?
Gods, what a race of contumelious men
Is now produc'd by this degenerate soil!
Who form'd, who cherish'd sentiments so base
As those which now disgrace our City's name?
Where are the sons of Brutus and Fabricius?
Regulus *shall* remain! What is my crime;
That I have thus incurr'd my Country's hatred?

DECIUS.

Sir, 'tis thy country's love, which doth resolve
To save thy life and strip thee of thy bonds.

REGULUS.

And what were Regulus without his chains?
They are my ornaments—my brightest trophies.
Aided by these, ere long I shall become
My country's glory and the foe's reproach;
But, pluck them from me, and ye straight behold
A perjurd, fugitive, dishonor'd slave.

HORTENSIVS.

Thy oath was plighted to a treacherous foe.
'Twas given in fetters; and the Augurs—

REGULUS.

Peace!

Leave to the swarthy Arab and the Moor
These sordid pretexts for their want of faith;
Nor rob your country of her greatest boast,
To teach the universe integrity.

DECIUS.

But what will be the fate of hapless Rome,
If, in the lesson, she resign her *father*?

REGULUS.

Let Rome be mindful that the citizen
Whom she hath dignified with *that* proud name,
Is but a mortal: He, like other men,
May fall beneath the sword: Like other men,
He feels the blood chill in his aged veins:
That his frail limbs no longer can endure
The weight of arms: That nothing now remains,
To crown his hopes, but to conclude his days,
As shall become a patriot and a Roman.
Propitious Heaven hath open'd to my view
A splendid path, in which I long to tread:
And would ye load my name with infamy?
Oh, 'tis impossible! I know your hearts,
No man who, with his earliest breath, hath drawn
The soul-inspiring air of honor'd Rome,

Can hold opinions opposite to mine.
I feel assur'd that, in your secret thoughts,
Ye do applaud and envy Regulus ;
Offering petitions to the throne of Jove,
That he will bless ye with so fair a death.
Throw off this weakness then : Lay down those arms ;
Nor longer strive to wean me from my duty.
As friend, I *ask*—as citizen, *exhort*—
As *father*, I *command* ye to obey.

MANLIUS.

If, contumaciously, ye still refuse,
Ye are unworthy of the earth ye tread.

DECIUS.

The blame be ours : we will not lose Attilius.

REGULUS (*stepping forward.*)

Mark me, ye men of Rome, while here I swear,
(And call high Heaven to sanctify my vow)
If any man of this tumultuous throng
Shall raise an arm to stay me from my purpose,
This hand (as yet unstain'd by Roman blood)
Shall curb his folly by a tragic deed,
That (if one spark of virtue doth exist
Within his soul) shall make him blush to think

On this day's strife and wish that he had shar'd
The better fate of yon misguided youth.

[*Pointing to the body of LICINIUS.*

There stands the witness of my former oath :

[*Pointing to HAMILCAR.*

Which, in the presence of assembled Rome,
I now renew, and either will fulfil,
Or this kind saviour of its master's fame ;

[*Drawing a dagger.*

This sure protector of my country's greatness ;
Impell'd by your perverted zeal, shall shed
The vital stream of this devoted heart.
Nay, should your rashness urge me to the deed,
Your guilty soil shall not possess my corse ;
For, when my breast hath met my weapon's point,
While ebbing life affords me utterance,
In solemn covenant I will bequeath
My blood-stain'd trunk, to be convey'd to Carthage ;
And, with my dying gasp, will supplicate
That, to her Senators, it may be told,
How I have striven to render it with life.
Not e'en the fiat of eternal Jove,
Is with more firmness of decision breath'd,

Than this my ultimate and fixt resolve.
Or, unmolested, suffer me to pass,
And still preserve your name immaculate ;
Or, on this spot, behold Attilius bleed,
And make this day the grave of Roman glory.
The choice is yours; and now to meet the proof.

[On pronouncing the last line of the above, REGULUS advances towards the Ship, with the dagger raised and pointed towards his breast ; upon which the Citizens throw down their arms, and, falling back each way, leave free access to the Ships. REGULUS then returns and, looking upwards, continues.]

Oh ! then, I thank you, ye immortal Gods ;
That ye have chosen me your instrument
To arbitrate the destiny of Rome !
That ye have granted to your servant's tongue
The power to snatch his country from dishonor !

[Turning to HAMILCAR and pointing to the Ships.]

Now, Sir, lead on ; our path is unobstructed.

[HAMILCAR, BARCIA, and Guards embark.]

HAMILCAR (*aside as he passes REGULUS.*)

Spite of myself, I envy this man's fate !

REGULUS.

Romans, adieu ! and let this parting scene

Be deeply grav'd on each spectator's heart.

I leave ye worthy of the name ye bear.

Determine to preserve it spotless still,

And earth's extremest verge shall own your power,

And all the world be one extended Rome.

[*Raising his eyes.*

Now, all ye tutelary Deities ;

Celestial guardians of this land of heroes,

Cease not to make her your peculiar care.

Let virtue, valor, fortitude, and truth,

Still grace her sons ; and, should some adverse star,

(Shedding its baneful influence around)

Menace the glory of the Capitol ;

Stretch, o'er the sacred dome, your shielding hands,

And let th' accumulated bolts of Heaven

Fall on the head of Regulus alone.

Here let the angry fates consume their ire ;

But for my country !—Tis too much—farewell !

[*REGULUS turns abruptly and hastily embarks,
and the Ship is immediately in motion.*]

[Enter *ATTILIA* hastily and in excessive agitation. She looks wildly around, but the body of *LICINIUS* is concealed by some Citizens standing before it.]

ATTILIA.

Where is the Tribune? Manlius! Publius! speak!

[*She runs first to MANLIUS, then to PUBLIUS.*

Who struck th' accursed blow? or, rather, say

'Twas but a falsehood to enhance my torment.

Swear to me, brother, that the citizen

Who brought the tidings was a perjur'd slave.

Bid me discard all credence of his death.

How, silent still! 'Tis, then, alas! too true.

[*PUBLIUS turns away his face and points to the body of LICINIUS, the Citizens having removed from before it. ATTILIA looks towards the body.*]

Ha! 'tis Licinius! 'tis my murder'd love!

The gory witness of my blighted joys!

[*She runs to the body, and, kneeling beside it, anxiously feels if it has any life: then rises and turns to MANLIUS.*]

Was't not enough, ye revellers in blood,

To tear my aged parent from mine arms,
For savages to rack his feeble limbs ?
Was't not enough that, when ye so decreed,
(Obedient to my patriot sire's behest)
I disciplin'd my bursting orphan heart,
Nor breath'd, in public, one reproachful murmur,
But ye must stab my soul's elected lord,
And make the havoc of my hopes complete ?
What was his crime, but that yon streaming breast,
Glowing with gratitude, too fondly lov'd
His boyhood's monitor. If this be guilt
To merit such remorseless punishment,
Attilia doubly shar'd in the offence,
Nor will avoid the penalty : Look on ;
And, if your vengeance be unsated still,
Here, to consummate this day's sacrifice,
[Drawing a dagger.

Behold one more self-immolated victim.

[She raises the dagger to stab herself, PUBLIUS
rushes forward and seizes her hand.]

PUBLIUS.

Hold thy rash hand, infatuated girl !

[He wrests the dagger from her.

ATTILIA.

In vain you strive to frustrate my design.

Think not that I will longer cherish life,

When ye have rifled it of all its sweets.

No; if there be, in Rome, or steel or bane—

[She suddenly observes the drawn sword which lies near the body of LICINIUS: she snatches it up—PUBLIUS presses forward to disarm her, but, before he can arrest her hand, she wounds herself and throws the sword from her.]

It is achiev'd; and my exulting heart

Can bid defiance to your proud restraint.

Now will we be united by a bond

Beyond the power of human dissolution.

For, while our sanguine currents mingle here,

Our franchis'd shades shall, smiling, soar to Heaven,

And taste the rapture of Elysian nuptials.

[She throws herself upon the body of LICINIUS, looks wildly upward and speaks falteringly.]

Ye beck'ning fates, I come! my struggling soul

Pants to be free, nor longer will endure

Its fragile tenement!—Oh, fleet not yet,

Thou blest ethereal form !—Still hover near,
And snatch my spirit hence !

[Stretching out her arms.

One moment stay !

One moment yet.—Licinius ! Oh, Licinius !

[She dies.

FINIS.

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